



A
SAVAGE
OF
CIVILIZATION

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

“ Either some Cæsar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth ; with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country by your own institutions.”—*Macaulay*.

A SAVAGE OF CIVILIZATION.

CHAPTER I.

Above the great city the sun rode in a sky that was pale with the light mist of sultry heat. It was not quite six hours high but already the city felt its power. Stone, brick, and asphalt, partially cooled by the faint freshness of the short summer night, were beginning once more to radiate heat. The tin roofs were already too hot to touch, and the dwellers in the tenement-house districts, after a restless night on the house tops, had been driven below. Most of them had taken refuge in the shadow of the tall houses on the south side of the street. There they were making themselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit; for it was Sunday, and, for one day, every man was his own master.

Along one of the cross streets that cut through the east side tenement district of New York, a man of dirty and dilapidated appearance was threading his way among the throng that blocked the sidewalk. No doubt there were many such men engaged in the same occupation on that particular Sunday morning; at any rate the sight was not sufficiently unusual to attract any special attention from the people among whom he made his way.

The man wore an old felt hat pulled well over his eyes and with the brim turned down so as further to conceal his face. From underneath the hat-brim his eyes, small, shifty, and furtive, surveyed everything that came within their range, with incessant vigilance. They traveled over the sidewalks, where men in their shirt-sleeves were smoking as they leaned against area railings, and women in various stages of dishabille were fanning themselves and telling each other how hot it was: they surveyed the cobblestone pavement where half-naked children were running back and forth and whirling round hand in hand, singing, laughing and screaming: they swept over the houses on both sides of the way where people were leaning half way out of the windows and calling across to each other.

He was well over towards the East River, when his eyes, as they traveled from window to window, suddenly became fixed. He took half a dozen steps more and came to a standstill. Years of a wild beast life had made him instinctively cunning, and he halted behind a dray full of children who were making believe take a ride. From this concealment he continued to gaze intently.

At last he uttered a low laugh—an evil laugh, more ugly than the curse that immediately followed it—as a big girl, holding a little boy by the hands and jumping round and round, brought herself to a sudden stop by colliding with him.

The man scowled; the abashed girl, who had a pleasant face, would have apologized had she known how.

Presently, affecting good nature, he said, "No harm done, young people will be young, all the world over. Can you tell me who that lady is in that fourth-story window?"

"That's Mrs. Robarts, and the young man without any coat on, in the next window, reading, that's her son, John."

"Ah!" muttered the man.

The girl waited to see if he had anything more to say.

"I suppose she's friendly with all the people about here, visits them and all that sort of thing, eh?"

"Oh! yes, sir. She's very good friends with everybody."

"And how long has she lived here-about?"

The girl raised her eyes and was lost in a calculation.

"About,—er—two years; yes, she came here just before the baby was born, and he's two years old next month."

"Has she got a baby?"

"Oh, no, sir. I meant mamma's baby. Mrs. Robarts' husband has been dead ever so many years, before John was born; and he's over twenty."

The man smiled sardonically.

"Dead, is he? Poor woman. I hope she don't have trouble making a living."

"Oh, no, sir. She works at dressmaking and John works in a nail factory and they live very nice."

The man was going on without any thanks for

the information he had received, when his attention was arrested by a voice from behind him. Turning, he found himself face to face with a youth who was leaning nonchalantly against the dray ; attired in the negligee style common to the men of that street, a quizzical smile on his lips and a cigarette between them.

“Hope ye found out all ye wanted to know about them Robartses.”

The tramp’s first impulse was to be angry. Then prudence whispered that it was better to be civil.

“Perhaps *you* could tell me something more about them, my obliging young friend.”

“Yes. Certain I can. I know Jack Robarts well. Makes him hoppin’ mad to call him Jack. That’s why I do it. He’d like to lick me for it only I ain’t big enough and he don’t never hit no feller smaller’n he is.”

“Does he ever hit fellers as big as he is ?”

“Yes. He ain’t afraid of nobody, Jack Robarts ain’t. I’ve knowed him to be licked, but I ain’t never knowed him to be scared.”

“Oh!!”

“Yes, sir. He don’t take no talk from nobody, and he can hold up his end in a scrap, Jack can.”

“Does his mother approve of that sort of thing ?”

“Lord ! no. She’s a pious woman, she is. She goes around to the mission chapel every Sunday and sometimes week-days, and she’s got a bible and hymn book and prayer book what the minister gave her. I’ve seen ‘em up there on a shelf. But Jack treats her first-rate—takes her out sometimes

on Sundays, and walks home from church with her, just as if she was his girl. He's a queer duck, Jack is. He ain't never had no girl and don't look as if he ever was going to. Don't care nothin' 'bout 'em."

"Well, well, well. But I must be going. Business is business and mine's so pressing it don't let me rest, even on Sundays."

The man walked on. When opposite the house where Mrs. Robarts was sitting, he stopped, propped himself against a coal cart and waited, what for, nobody knew or cared. Presently the young man left the window. Before long he came out and crossed over to the shady side of the street, passing close to the man leaning against the cart.

John Robarts was tall, with dark curly hair and bright brown eyes. The stranger watched till he disappeared; then he crossed and entered the house.

Mrs. Robarts, still sitting by the window, was startled by a knock. She was a nervous woman and started at trifles. After a moment she called "Come in."

The door opened and the tramp slowly entered the room.

The woman started to her feet. "Ah—ah—I—think you've mistaken the room, sir," she stammered.

"No, I haven't; this is the room I was looking for, and you're the person I want to see."

"What—what can I do for you, sir?"

She shrank towards the window, ready to call for help.

The man took off his hat: "Don't you recollect me, Mary? Well, well, that's the way of the world. I recognize my long-lost sister from across the street, but she don't know me because I'm poor and down on my luck! I didn't think you'd treat me so."

"Sam!" gasped the woman.

"Yes, it's Sam, and he ain't had a meal for two days, or a night's lodging for two weeks, and he's pretty near giving up."

The man seated himself in an armchair and waited for the woman to recover from the shock that he had inflicted. He was in no hurry. He leaned back in the chair and enjoyed the unaccustomed comfort, while he examined the neatly furnished room with considerable satisfaction. At last, the woman spoke.

"I can hardly believe it's you, Sam."

"I don't wonder, Mary. I'm changed from what I was in the happy days when we were young. I know that, well enough. You seem to be well fixed here, better than you were last time I saw you."

The woman made no answer and he continued.

"That boy of yours seems to be a fine fellow and good son. I suppose he earns his own living now and helps support you, too."

"Yes, he's a good son, John is."

The man leaned forward and looked at her fixedly.

"He don't *know*, does he?"

The woman's pale face flushed, then grew paler than before, and her work-worn hands clenched convulsively. She shook her head.

"Ah! that's right. Great deal better he shouldn't!"

After a long silence the man began to tell of his

life since they had last met—the usual story of hard luck and unsuccessful search for work, that seemed to have lured him on from one end of the continent to the other. Presently, when he perceived that her attention flagged, he cut the thread of his discourse.

“By the way, Mary, you haven’t said you were glad to see me. I know I ain’t the kind of a caller that ladies are proud of. I suppose you wouldn’t like that son of yours to come in, and have to introduce me to him as his uncle.”

“Don’t say that, Sam.”

“If I only had a new suit of clothes, and—say a hundred dollars in cash,” continued the man, “I could get along all right and never ask you for another cent. You see, when a fellow’s so far down as I am, he can’t seem to get up again. No one will employ a man dressed like I am. But with a new suit of clothes and a few dollars, even fifty say, a man can get work and then he’s all right. You seem to be well off, Mary. Why, the furniture in this room must be worth two hundred dollars.”

“Oh! no Sam. It wouldn’t fetch half of that.”

“Well, I’m getting to be desperate. I can’t go on this way much longer. I must steal, or commit suicide, or something. Perhaps that fine young nephew of mine might do something for me—but then he might ask me awkward questions, and you know I never could tell a lie.”

The woman was beginning to wipe her eyes. “It’s hard,” she murmured, “I thought it was dead and buried. I never thought after all these years it

would come back on me this way. And I've tried to atone for the past—God knows I have; and I've been a good mother to him."

The man watched her with contemptuous indifference.

There was a pause broken by the woman's low sobs. At last her brother spoke again.

"Give me a hundred dollars and I'll go away and never come back. But money I must and will have. I'm a desperate man. If you were any kind of a sister you'd sell everything you've got rather than see your brother in jail for stealing, or dragged out of the river, drowned."

"Oh! Sam! I can't let you have that much money. I haven't got it. I can give you--perhaps—twenty dollars."

"Twenty dollars!" he said, scornfully; "if you knew the work I've had finding you, my girl, you wouldn't offer me twenty dollars. I've been looking for you ten years, off and on; and now I've found you—by—" Here he brought his fist down on the arm of the chair. "I'll get something handsome out of you or you shall suffer for it."

"Don't speak like that, Sam," pleaded the woman.

"Well, then, be reasonable."

"But a hundred dollars!"

"Pshaw! It's well for you I'm not avaricious, or I'd make you pay to the tune of two hundred."

"Sam!" deprecatingly.

"Sam me no Sams," said the ruffian, grinning maliciously. "But out with the money and I'll get out. Or give me your solemn oath that you'll have

the money here a week from to-day and I'll come for it then. But mind you--no nonsense."

The door flew open and with two long strides John Robarts reached the centre of the room. His mother screamed. The tramp started to his feet, for the young man's countenance boded him no good.

"See here, my friend," said John, in an angry tone. "There's a door there and a flight of stairs outside. Now there's two ways of going out of a door and down a flight of stairs. One is to walk and the other is to be thrown. You'd better choose which way you'll take quick, or I'll choose for you."

"Oh! John," cried the mother, "don't—don't."

She laid her hands on his arm, but the visitor realized that she was a very frail protection, and he moved sullenly to the door. At the threshold he paused and gave one backward look, full of venom. John slammed the door after him and returned to his mother.

"I suppose I ought to have chucked him over the banisters," he said, "but I hate to get up rows in the house, especially on Sunday. It's a big disgrace to the city that a man can't leave his mother alone for twenty minutes but what some dirty loafer has the impudence to come way up to the top story and insult her. I suppose he was trying to get money, wasn't he?"

"Yes."

"I'll fix a bolt on that door to-morrow and when I'm away you mustn't let people in until you know who they are. I couldn't find any book at Jake Simpson's that I wanted. I guess I'll join some

library or other. There's one has a branch office only about six blocks from here."

"If it wouldn't cost you too much it would be a good idea," said the woman absently.

"I say, mother. Suppose we go to Coney Island to-day. It's fearfully hot, and that fellow has frightened you, and I think it would do you good to get out of the city and forget about it."

She consented and went to her room, coming out presently wearing a white straw bonnet, a plaid shawl over her arm, and a parasol still in good condition.

When they reached the street, the woman looked around timorously as if expecting to see her brother ; but he was not in sight.

CHAPTER II.

Two hours later John Robarts and his mother were slowly walking along the sands of Coney Island. The woman was still suffering from the fright she had received, and apprehensive for the future. She was well aware that she had not seen the last of her disreputable brother, and was wondering what he would do, and revolving plans of escape from his persecutions. That some kind of an explanation would soon have to be given to her son, she knew instinctively, for she saw that he was unusually abstracted ; and, in order to postpone the dreaded moment, she endeavored to keep in the crowd—a task not difficult on a fine Sunday at Coney Island.

But John was not to be baffled for very long, for after several vain attempts to draw his companion into a quiet place, he bluntly informed her that he wished to speak to her where they could not be overheard.

His mother caught her breath at this, but had to assent, and before long they had reached a part of the beach where they were out of ear shot of the rest of the holiday-makers.

“I wanted to ask you about that man, mother. Do you know who he is or anything about him ?”

Mary Robarts had expected this, sooner or later, and had resolved what to say.

"I'd rather not answer that question, John, but if you insist I'll tell you."

"You've never had any secrets from me before, mother."

She looked away from him and the blood came hot into her face. It was some time before she could command her voice to reply.

"I know it, John. It's not that I want to have any. But that man is something I don't like to talk about. It's not pleasant. I'd like to forget that he ever lived."

"Well."

He spoke as though dismissing the subject; but after a moment's thought, she determined that it would be unwise not to tell him.

"I think you'd better know the whole truth, John. It's not pleasant, as I was saying, but we can't have everything pleasant;—that man is your uncle."

"That *is* unpleasant," he said.

"I know it. He was always a trial to us, but he wasn't like what he is now when I last saw him ten years ago or more; he was working then and wore decent clothes and had money. But now you see what he is. He wanted to get money from me and I'm sure I'd have given him what I have, for he's my own father and mother's son; but he wanted more than I could give him. Then he got angry. He always had a bad temper."

John walked on in silence for awhile. Then he said sternly, "I don't care who he is, he needn't come around to us after money. He's made his bed and he's got to lie in it. And I won't be disgraced

by having him hanging around our flat. He'll find that out if he tries it."

"Oh! John be careful what you do. Don't speak to him or go near him. He's a bad, wicked man. If he speaks to you don't have anything to do with him. We'll go away somewhere where he can't find us."

"I'm more inclined to make him feel like going somewhere where I can't find him. These fellows are like curs, mother. Whenever they show their teeth, just kick them and they run away, but if you run away from them, they'll bite you."

"But, John, he's your uncle."

"I don't care, he's a disreputable person and I won't be disgraced by him just because he happens to be related to me. Blood may be thicker than water, but you and I have always been respectable, mother. We've held up our heads among the people, and we're going to keep on doing it. If I thought I could get rid of him once for all by giving him some money I'd do it, but those fellows always come back after more. You might as well try to keep dogs away by throwing them meat whenever they come. No, it's a bad business but we have got to put a bold face on it, and we must stand by each other. If he comes when I'm at work don't let him in, will you?"

She shook her head.

"I'm sorry it's happened, mother. I'm sure I know you've had trouble enough in your life, and for the rest of it I'm going to save you all the trouble I can."

“Trouble, John, what trouble?”

He had been looking far out to sea where an ocean steamer was smudging the sky with a streak of black smoke, but there was something in his mother’s voice that made him look at her inquiringly as he answered.

“Why, about my father.”

“Your father?”

Her great dark eyes were fixed on him with a look that he did not understand.

“Yes. Seems to me it’s hard enough for a woman to be left in the world to take care of herself and a child. I haven’t forgotten how you used to work before I was old enough to earn anything and I don’t believe my father could have been very kind to you because you never want to speak about him.”

She sighed and cast her eyes on the ground.

“If I thought it was really for your happiness,” he continued, “I’d do as you want me to, but it would be an awful trouble and expense to move, and like as not he’d follow us up, somehow; you can bet he’s got more cunning in his little finger than we have in our whole bodies.”

“But he’s such a bad man, John. No one can tell what he might do.”

“He won’t dare to do anything but skulk around and try to get at you when I’m away.”

“But he might say things about us to the neighbors.”

She said this with face averted.

“Let him. Who’ll believe such a loafer as he is?”

The woman was silenced for the time, and they returned to the city.

On the way home but little was said on any subject. The son was taciturn by disposition. The mother seemed to be thinking of something that she was not inclined to talk about.

The change from the stifling city to the cool breezes of the ocean was so agreeable that they did not return till late. About nine o'clock they reached home. The street was still full of people. It was too hot to put the children to bed and many of them were asleep on the doorsteps or in the laps of mothers and big sisters.

The mother and son had nearly reached their own door, when the woman started and seized her son's arm, and pointed to a dark figure seated on the doorstep. The young man quietly disengaged himself and stepped forward. The figure rose and confronted him.

"What are you doing here, sir?" he demanded.

"What business is that of yours, my gay young cockalorum?"

"It's this much my business. If you come around bothering my mother, I'll half kill you, mind that."

"You will—will you—you young bastard!"

The man had been drinking or he would have known better than to use that word. Scarcely had he uttered it when he staggered back from a blow in the face.

A shriek—a wild chorus of cries. Children and grown people came running from all directions. A woman rushed between the disputants.

“John!” she cried. “Don’t. It’s your uncle.”

“Yes,” cried the tramp furiously, “and I suppose you think it’s a disgrace to you, you young prig, that your uncle is poor and ragged. But I know what is a worse disgrace. It’s to have a bastard for a nephew. Hit me again, curse you, and I’ll have you arrested.”

That word acted like a spell. To be arrested was nothing uncommon to many of the inhabitants of that street. But John Robarts had never been arrested, and was proud of his reputation. Turning to his mother who had sunk on the doorstep and was leaning against the railing, he said, “Come up-stairs. The loafer is too drunk to know what he’s doing.”

“Yes, I’m a loafer,” shouted the tramp, mad with rage and bad liquor, “but I’m the son of an honest woman and that is more than you are. Your very name is a lie. You call yourself John Robarts but your mother’s name is Wilson, and by Heaven she was never married to Roberts, or any one else. Answer me, Mary Wilson. Am I speaking the truth? I dare you to deny it.”

Twenty pairs of curious eyes were turned towards the woman crouching on the doorstep. Her face was covered by her hands. She made no answer except a low groan. A man’s voice cried “Shame” and the owner tried to drag the tramp away. He shook himself free and continued, “Yes she is a pious woman, that sister of mine; she goes to church and she’s brought up her boy in the way he should go, but there was a time when she was none too careful; and that young fellow is what came of it.”

John Robarts had been standing perfectly still while the scoundrel was speaking. A man confronted with the Gorgon's head could not have been more silent and motionless. With these last words he seemed to recover the power of speech and movement. He turned towards his mother and spoke in a voice so unnaturally calm, that the bystanders peered at him through the obscurity, trying to read his face. They saw it white and hard in the dim light from the street lamps, as void of emotion as his voice.

"Mother, if *you* want to stay here you can stay, but I'm going."

He turned and disappeared in the house. His mother rose, half staggering, and followed him. The disappearance of the two seemed to recall the ruffian to his senses. He pulled his hat over his eyes, thrust his hands deep into his pockets and sauntered away in the direction of the nearest saloon, followed by a crowd of children.

With some difficulty Mrs. Robarts succeeded in reaching the door of her own apartments. Mechanically she turned the handle and entered. Leaning against a window-frame she could see the tall figure of her son. He turned towards her as she entered.

"Mother, is that you?" The words were commonplace enough, but there was something in his voice, so hard and clear, like the ring of steel, that struck a cold chill in his mother's heart. "Is what that man said true? I want to know."

The woman made no answer. He waited, his back to the window, his arms folded.

A stifled sob came from the dim figure standing before him.

“So, he was right. You don’t dare to deny it?”

“Oh! John. Haven’t I always been a good mother to you?”

“Miserable woman,” cried the young man, striding forward one step and clenching his hands as if he would drive the nails into his flesh. “You were a bad mother to me in being my mother at all. You were a bad mother when, for fear of your own safety you were too much of a coward to strangle me in your lap. But you brought me up and here I am with the mark of *your* disgrace on me, blackened and branded like a convict, when I have never committed a crime. All the dirty riff-raff who listened to that drunken beast think themselves now better than me. They’ll point at me in the street. They’ll draw their skirts out of my way—that is, they would if I’d give them a chance, but to-morrow morning I shall be far away from here and none of them shall ever see me again if I can help it. Not that I’d run away from them. No, nor lie out of it. But from henceforth your path and mine are separate. But there is one thing I want you to tell me before I go. Who is he?”

“John—will you leave me?”

Her hands were clasped in front of her and had it not been for the darkness, he would have seen the tears running down her face; but even that would not have moved him to pity.

“Yes. You will not see me again after to-night. What is his name?”

“I can’t tell you.”

Even in the obscurity he saw a spasm of pain pass over the woman’s face, but he was not sorry for her.

“Who is he?” he repeated.

“Oh! John, what good would it do to know?”

“Good!” he said, laughing harshly. “Perhaps, it won’t do me any good, but by the Almighty, it won’t be my fault if it doesn’t do him some harm, unless he’s dead. Is he dead?”

“No. But think, it is twenty years since then.”

“What is his name?”

“What will you do if I tell you?”

“Find him.”

“And what then?”

“I don’t know.”

“You’ll do something dreadful, I know it.”

“Well, if you want to screen your ex-lover who seems to have cast you off like an old shoe, do it. But I’ll find him, in spite of you. At least you have been kind to me and taken care of me when I was unable to take care of myself, and though I’ll never forgive you for being my mother, I’ll call it quits and will take no revenge on you. But he—the man who—”

The words seemed to choke him. He ground his teeth and passing his mother, entered his own room.

For about an hour John Robarts remained in his room while his mother cried silently in her chair by the window. She did not dare to disturb him, but was determined to have a word with him when he came out. She heard him moving about at intervals and could see a light through the chinks of the door. At

last he came out, carrying an overcoat and a shabby valise in his hand. The woman advanced towards him. "John," she said.

"Well?"

"You—you," she broke down completely.

"What do you wish to say?"

"You are not—not going to leave me? To leave your poor mother to die of a broken heart?"

He turned on his heel, threw open the hall door and disappeared in the darkness.

"John!" she cried, in an agonized voice, "John, come back."

He made no answer. She could hear his descending steps.

She went to the window and saw him emerge into the street. She watched him until he was out of sight, and then rushed to her own room and threw herself on the bed.

* * * * *

Seated comfortably in the back room of the corner saloon the tramp was contemplating a glass of whiskey and water. Suddenly he sprang up and backed towards the barroom door.

The cause of this sudden movement was his nephew who entered by the side door—equipped for a journey.

"What do you want of me? Keep off, now, I tell you," was the greeting of the uncle.

"Sit down here and I'll tell you," answered Robarts coolly.

"No violence, now, or I'll call assistance," said the older man.

“Sit down and don’t be a fool,” was the answer.
“Send for some more whiskey.”

He was still suspicious, but complied. John was not anxious for a long colloquy, but came to the point as soon as the whiskey had been ordered.

“Now I’ll tell you what I want of you. You told me some disagreeable things in the street. You said they were true. Now I want to hear the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”

“Oh! Don’t mind that. You see I was drunk and you had threatened to throw me down-stairs and I was *mad*. Then you hit me and I was madder still. Give your poor destitute uncle a few dollars, just enough to keep body and soul together and he’ll go and swear that all he said was lies, and that your mother is as honest a woman as the sun ever shone on.”

“I know it wasn’t lies.”

“I know it was true, but if I swear it is a lie, the people will believe me.”

“I don’t want you to swear to any lies, what I want is to know the truth.”

The tramp saw the waiter coming with the fresh glasses. He lifted his own glass and with a “Here’s to you, my boy,” he tossed it off. When the waiter had gone, the younger continued:

“What is my father’s name?”

The other winked and laid his finger against his nose.

“I’m like Lawyer Marks. I don’t give information *gratis*.”

"I believe you are too drunk to give any information."

"Don't go. Sit still. Give me five dollars and I'll tell you all you want to know."

"Well, I know just enough to make sure whether you are telling me the truth. If you do, I'll give you the five dollars—if not, you won't get a cent. Now, who is my father?"

The man hesitated a moment, but finally concluded to do as directed.

"I'll tell you the whole story," he said.

"Tell me nothing except what I ask you. What is my father's name?"

"John Laford."

"Where does he live?"

"In New Manchester, Illinois."

"What is his business?"

"He has a big factory there. I don't know what he manufactures."

"Has my mother any relatives in New York?"

"Yes, Samuel Wilson, that's me; and yourself; and Susan Wilson, her sister." The young man took no notice of his uncle's jocularity.

"Where does Susan Wilson live?"

"I don't recollect her number but it is in Twelfth Street; and she's a mean skinflint who wouldn't give a dollar to save her own father from dying."

John rose, threw a five-dollar note on the table, paid for the liquor, and took his departure. His uncle thoughtfully emptied both glasses and then called for some more.

After leaving the liquor store the young man

found a lodging house, where he engaged a room. He left his baggage, and wandered for the rest of the night. Where he went he never knew. Daylight found him at the Battery, and at five o'clock he was in a drug store looking over a directory. He found several Susan Wilsons, but only one lived in Twelfth Street. Thither he went, finding it a quiet, substantial looking brick house on the west side of town. Miss Wilson was at breakfast and he was shown into a small, plainly furnished parlor. Before long a short, red-haired woman appeared.

"Are you the gentleman who wanted to see Miss Wilson?" she inquired.

"Yes."

"I'm Miss Wilson." She took out a diminutive watch and looked at it significantly.

"I won't keep you but a moment. You have a sister, haven't you, named Mary Wilson?"

The woman stared and colored. "Yes," she said. "But I haven't seen her these twenty years."

"Did you ever know John Laford?"

Her color deepened. "Never," emphatically. "But I've seen him, and I consider him a villain, and I don't care who knows it."

"Thank you, that is all I wanted to know."

"Who are you?" said she, following him to the door. "You have asked me some strange questions and I'd like to know who you are."

"That's what I'd like to know myself," he said, with a rather curious smile. "My mother's name was Wilson and my father's name was Laford and they were never married. What is my name?"

"Good Heavens," exclaimed the woman, starting back. "You are —"

"Yes, exactly, my dear aunt. *I am*; but what I am, whether Wilson or Laford or neither, it is hard to say. I did not intend to reveal myself, but you insisted on it. We understand each other now. Good morning."

He left her standing in the door, and she looked after him for some time as if stupefied.

CHAPTER III.

NEW MANCHESTER and two other towns, named respectively Iron City and Locustown, form together one of those mushroom cities that have sprung up in the central part of the United States since the war. The three towns are divided from each other by a river with two branches. Iron City lies in the fork. Locustown lies to the north of the main river and New Manchester to the south. Near the river, on both sides, are factories. Higher up are the cottages of the hands, with here and there a four-story tenement house towering above them. Higher still, are the houses of the clerks and shopkeepers, and higher yet, the mansions of the manufacturers. Steamers of light draught ply in the river, and the city is connected by two railroads. It is a thriving place and growing rapidly. The census of 1870 showed twenty-four thousand inhabitants while in 1880 there were eighty-two thousand.

Nearly half the population is of foreign extraction. The old inhabitants say that poverty, disease and crime have multiplied at a frightful rate since the prosperity of the town began. In 1870 the police force consisted of about sixty men. In 1880 it had risen to four hundred and was hardly then adequate to the needs of the place. Liquor stores are innumerable and constantly recurring temperance agitations fail to reduce their number.

The productions of the sister cities are varied. There are rolling mills, cotton and woolen mills, pin and nail factories, and various other kinds of factories, employing in all some thirty-eight thousand hands. Two thousand are generally "out on strike."

The principal street of New Manchester is called "St. Joseph's Place." It runs along the crest of a ridge which forms the highest part of the town. On both sides are large houses of stone and brick, with broad verandas and spacious grounds. The street is macadamized and there are brick sidewalks. On one of these sidewalks, near the middle of an August day, a young man was sauntering along looking curiously at the houses on either side of him. An old man with a scythe, going back to work after dinner, was accosted by him.

"Can you tell me where John Laford lives?"

"You're a stranger here, I guess."

"I only came to-day."

"I thought so. There ain't many people in this town that don't know where John Laford lives. It is that big house where the carriage is just turning in."

"Much obliged."

"Ain't no trouble. Can I tell you anything else?"

"Mr. Laford is married, I suppose?"

"Oh! yes. Mrs. Laford is a fine lady. Very generous to the poor and kind to everybody. When I was sick last fall she sent me chickens and jelly and wine and other things good enough for a king, as you might say."

"And what sort of a man is Mr. Laford?"

"He's a proud sort of a man and ain't so good as his wife, I don't think. His hands say he's a hard man."

"Has he any children?"

"Yes, a son and daughter. There comes young Laford now."

A tall, dark-haired young man faultlessly dressed, and mounted on a superb bay horse, approached at an easy canter. The stranger looked at him with an expression of intense curiosity that quickly changed to a sullen scowl. He watched him as he turned into his gateway.

"Fine handsome young fellow, that," said the old man. "A good deal like his father but very pleasant with poor people, though I'm bound to say he never gives a thought to anyone but himself. But I'm disobeyin' the Scripture in passin' judgment on him."

"Well, I'm much obliged to you. I won't keep you any longer."

They parted. The old man went on to his work; the young man towards the Laford mansion. He had gone only a few steps when he heard a shout behind him.

"Hi! young fellow."

He turned and saw his elderly acquaintance pointing to a pony carriage which was coming up the street at a considerable distance.

"Some of the Lafords are in that carriage. I know them white ponies. Yes, it is Mrs. and Miss Laford."

"All right. Thank you,"

The old man went on his way again, but this time the young man stood and waited.

The pony-phaeton went by in a cloud of dust. Two ladies were in it. They were women of stately presence, fair-haired and well-favored. The younger looked older than she really was because of her height and the repose of her manner. The elder was well preserved. The stranger watched them intently but with less fierceness in his look than when he had been watching the young man.

“One more and I will have seen them all,” muttered the watcher. “He is the one I want to see most. *I must* see him before I go.”

Seating himself on the low stone wall and leaning his back against one of the gateposts of the Laford place, he sat almost without moving, hour after hour. The sun sank lower and the shadows lengthened. Vehicles and foot passengers passed and repassed.

At last, about five o’clock, a light, two-seated wagon appeared, drawn by a powerful sorrel horse. A middle-aged man of lofty stature with a nose like a hawk’s overhanging a heavy black moustache streaked with gray was holding the reins. As he turned into the drive leading up to his house he noticed the young man at the gate. He glanced at him causally, at first, but he saw in his face such a look of unutterable hate that his attention was instantly arrested. The two pairs of eyes, dark brown, and steel blue were fixed on each other for a moment.

“A dangerous looking fellow,” thought the older man as he drove up the avenue. “I have seen his

face somewhere before, and yet I can't remember where. Some discharged factory-hand, no doubt, with a grudge against me."

He dismissed the matter from his mind, for grudges borne by factory-hands were too common to be of much account. Before he had gone far up the drive he saw coming towards him two female figures daintily attired in white, and wearing straw hats. He pulled up his horse as they came near.

"Where are you two going, just before dinner?" he demanded, smiling. "If you don't get back in time for the substantials you shan't have any dessert."

One of the two, a petite, round-faced, peach-complexioned, curly-haired miss of seventeen clasped her small white hands, displaying to advantage two brilliant rings, and raised her dark blue eyes with a look of comical entreaty.

"You wouldn't be so cruel, Mr. Laford?"

"Yes, I would. My heart is as hard as a nether mill-stone."

"Well then (pouting) I don't care, so now!"

"We are just going over to Sally Heriott's and we will be back in half an hour," said the older of the two, the tall fair young lady of the pony-phaeton. "We have some arrangements to make for the tennis party to-morrow."

"Well, go on, and tell me all about it when you come back."

Laford let his horse go and the young ladies proceeded on their way.

The young man who had been leaning against the

gatepost had gone, but when, looking back, he saw the ladies emerge from the grounds, he walked towards them. They crossed the street and he followed them.

Walking rapidly he soon overtook them. As he came very close the younger girl clasped her companion's arm in alarm. As the latter turned to see what the sudden pressure meant, the stranger passed. He faced about and compelled them to stop. The younger shrank back, clinging to her companion. The elder gazed for a moment, too much astonished to be angry. Then her usually pale cheek flushed and an angry light came into her blue eyes. The dark eyes of the stranger seemed to kindle with an answering flash.

There was something singularly alike in the bearing of these two as they stood facing each other. It was diamond cut diamond, pride against pride, defiance against defiance. There was no fear in the lady's face, no glance around in search of assistance. Apparently oblivious of her high-bred indignation, the stranger looked at her intently, as if to impress every feature on the tablet of his brain.

Half a minute passed before either spoke; then Miss Laford asked icily "What do you want?"

"To see you close, and ask you a question."

His voice was cold and even, without the slightest touch of brutality; it was not even insolent.

"By what right do you presume to ask me any question?"

"By no right."

"Then I refuse to answer you."

“You will not tell me then whether the man who just went in that gate is your father?”

“He is my father, and he shall know of this and you shall hear from him.”

“Some day he shall hear from me.”

He stepped aside and went away without looking back.

“Let’s run,” gasped the younger girl. “He may come back.”

“Nonsense, Vi. Don’t you know that these creatures are just like tigers and wolves? If you show the least fear that is just the way to make them spring on you.”

“How splendidly you managed him. I was frightened almost to death; I wish I had your nerve.”

“Well,” laughing, “you must cultivate it. We will arrange an interview for you with one of those fellows every day till you get used to them.”

“Oh! dear! that would kill me.”

“It is a most disgraceful thing that those creatures are allowed in this part of the town. There ought to be one place where decent people could be safe. If our police were good for anything it wouldn’t be so. I wish I could see a mounted policeman now. I’d send and have that fellow arrested.”

“Oh! dear! but then we would both have to go and testify. I couldn’t stand it. Just think of the horrid lawyers asking us all sorts of dreadful questions, and the men all looking at us—and everything.”

“Pshaw! you ridiculous little goose.—What are you going to wear at tennis to-morrow?”

“I’m going to wear navy blue and a black straw hat, and you must wear all white.”

“So we must always be lily and violet,” said the taller girl smiling. “What a sentimental little darling you are.”

“Yes, lily and violet, now and always,” answered the other looking up and returning the smile. “Oh! Lily dear, I’m so glad that dreadful man is out of sight. He has gone behind those trees; but suppose he should come after us again?”

“He has no such intention.”

“I don’t wonder you frightened him away. You almost frightened me—you looked so like my old teacher, Miss Wetherstone—that is, your expression, I mean; she was a homely old thing—she used to look at me that way when I’d been naughty, and frighten me half to death. Oh! my! the day she saw me take that note from Charley Mason, in church. I wanted the rocks to fall on me and the hills to cover me. If you caught me now taking a note from somebody would you be dreadful to me?”

“I don’t think I’d hurt you much, but I wouldn’t want you to do anything unladylike.”

They finally turned in at a small side gateway leading to one of the stateliest mansions. Then “Vi” began again.

“What will you wear to-morrow, Lily darling?”

“Well, let me see. I shall wear white flannel and a white hat with a blue ribbon.”

“No, you must wear yellow ribbon. Remember, you are my lily. Now say that I’m your dear sweet little modest violet.”

“So you are, of course.”

“And you will wear yellow ribbon?”

“Oh! yes, and an old-gold belt.”

“That will be lovely. Oh! there is Sally, sitting under the tree.”

Meanwhile the impertinent stranger, in the opposite direction, had overtaken a certain old man with a scythe.

“Hallo! young fellow. Did you find out all you wanted to know about the Lafords?”

“Yes—no, not quite. Who is the pretty little girl with the curly brown hair who walks with Miss Laford?”

“That is Miss Violet Eversley—a relation of Mr. Laford’s. He is her guardian—her father and mother are both dead.”

“Where did Mr. Laford come from?”

“From New York.”

“And where is his factory?”

“He owns two of them, and employs more than two thousand hands. One is on James Street, a little way up from the river. The other is on Thompson Street, over that way.”

They walked on together but the conversation turned to other matters. The young man was anxious to find employment, and asked many questions about the factories, rates of wages, and so on. The older gave all the information he could and they parted, excellent friends, at the old man’s gate.

Not long after, Mr. Laford, on his veranda, was glancing over the evening papers when the young

ladies returned. Violet ran up the steps first and seated herself beside him.

“Oh! uncle,” she said, “you don’t know what a terrible adventure we have had. If it hadn’t been for Lily your poor little violet would have been ruthlessly plucked.”

“Ah! Tell me all about it.”

“Why, we were going over to Sally’s, and I looked behind, and there close to us was a most dreadful looking man. He wasn’t bad looking—that is he wasn’t homely, and he wasn’t dirty or ragged, but quite good-looking and very decently dressed—but oh! such an awful look on his face, as if he wanted to kill somebody. And he came up and spoke to Lily, and she looked straight in his eyes and answered him back. I don’t know what either of them said, I was too much frightened to remember, but at last she overawed him and he slunk away without touching us. Oh! won’t you make them have more policemen on this street?”

“It must be the same young fellow who stared at me when I was coming in at the gate,” he said. “Wasn’t he a tall, dark young man with curly hair?”

“Yes, and dreadful black eyes that seemed to glare right through you. Just like yours, uncle, when you’re angry, only yours are blue.”

“What did he say, Lily?”

Lily was standing in front of the great doorway, idly swinging her white parasol. “I hardly recollect. He asked me some question about you. Oh!

yes. He asked if it was my father who had just gone up to the house," she answered.

"I'll see what can be done. If necessary we will have some day watchmen around," said Mr. Laford. "These fellows are getting more dangerous every day. Now girls, you have no more than time to get ready for dinner and you know what a tyrant I am, or you would if you read 'The Fire-brand.'"

"Will Victor be home to dinner?" asked Violet, as she rose.

"No. He has just gone over to the other side of the street."

Violet's face fell. "To dine with Miss Locus, of course," she said.

Laford smiled as he answered, "Exactly. Nominally with Miss Locus' aunt, but Miss Locus is undoubtedly the attraction."

The young ladies disappeared and before long dinner was announced. About the time that soup was being served the young man who had made himself so obnoxious to them was taking a humble meal in an obscure boarding house in that part of the town known as the "Hands' quarter." The dining-room was in what was called the basement, in reality but little better than a cellar. Anxious to escape the close and heated atmosphere, he finished his meal hastily and made his way to the upper regions.

The landlady had followed him to his room, ostensibly to see if he needed anything;—really to have a conversation with an interesting young boarder. She asked several questions as to his past

history and future prospects and recounted some of her own trials and experiences. He answered her politely, but betrayed no desire for further intimacy. The room was in the top story, and being a large one contained three beds. During their conversation, one of the inmates appeared. He stopped at the threshold on seeing a stranger. "Come in, Mr. Armstrong,—this gentleman is your new roommate. Let me make you 'quainted with Mr. Armstrong, Mr. ——there now I've clean forgotten your name."

There was a peculiar smile on the young man's face as he answered :

"Nomanson."

* * * * *

When Mr. Laford examined the mail that evening he found a letter directed in a hand that seemed slightly familiar, though he could not name the writer. It was a small, neat, feminine hand, but far too legible and "copybook" for a lady's. "Some begging letter, I suppose," he said to himself as he tore it open. The first few words riveted his attention, and as he read his brow clouded and his face flushed.

The letter ran as follows :

NEW YORK Aug 11th.

Please excuse my taking the liberty of writing to you but my son John has been kept ignorant of you know what and now he has found out everything and he has spoken to me dreadful and said I am no longer his mother and he has vowed vengeance on you and he has gone I dont know wheare but do be careful and if you can have the poor boy sent back to

me he will not be twenty one for five months and moore if you could have him sent back to me without hurting him or making a public scandle I would be much obliged. O John Laford to think that this should come upon us after all these years and I have tried to be a good mother to him but God's will be done he punishes and he rewardes Understand I don't want any money I only want my son which is as much yours as mine though you have dissowned him poor boy but I wont reproche you for reproches are vane and do take care of yourself for he is ugly when he is roused and no one knows it better than I do. O do please send him back if you can to his unhappy mother

MARY R WILSON

P. S. Direct your letter to Mrs. Mary Robarts
911 Jackson St. New York

After reading this epistle Laford crumpled it up, put it in his pocket and went out of the house. His daughter seeing him walking towards the gate called after him "Where are you going, papa?"

"To the telegraph office," he answered. "I'll be back in half an hour. I have received a letter that needs to be attended to at once."

His telegram was addressed to a well-known detective firm in Chicago and was very brief:

"Send one of your best men at once."

J. C. LAFORD.

CHAPTER IV.

ABOUT noon next day Mr. Laford was seated in the sacred precincts of his factory on James Street absorbed in an account book of ponderous size. The door opened softly and his confidential clerk entered. He closed the door carefully and stood waiting for his patron to signify that he was ready to be spoken to. Some time passed, then Laford looked up and asked "What is it, Robert?"

"Man from Chicago—says you telegraphed for him last night."

"Oh! yes. Show him in."

Presently a tall thin man entered the room. A moustache and "goatee" of yellow, streaked with gray, adorned his mouth and chin. His eyes were gray, cold and steady. He fixed them on the millionaire and stood "sizing him up" in the true detective style. Laford met him with a gaze as fixed and searching as his own, as he motioned his visitor to a chair.

"I didn't expect you quite so soon, but I'm glad to see you, for every moment may be valuable," said Laford.

"I'd gone to bed when your telegram came," said the other. "I had just come in from Pittsburgh and was pretty tired, but they sent a messenger boy and routed me out, and I came by the 11:20 train from Chicago."

"You must be used up."

"Oh! no, we learn to sleep anywhere in our business. I sleep all right on the train and I'm as fresh as a lark."

"You're more fortunate than I am. I never can sleep in a sleeping-car. And now in regard to the matter for which I sent to your employers. First, what is your name?"

The man produced a card: "J. A. Steelyard."

"Now, Mr. Steelyard, this matter is very private—in fact very delicate—and—and—" the millionaire's cheek flushed and his voice faltered.

"I understand, sir. You can rely on my discretion. That is part of our business. We know lots of family secrets, but we know how to keep our mouths shut. You are sure that we are not overheard, I suppose? Perhaps I'd better see to that."

The detective examined a closet and two adjoining rooms. He then returned and reseated himself saying "Perhaps you'd better send that young man in the next room on an errand."

Laford struck a bell. "Robert, I want you to take this note to the Locus Works and give it to Mr. Hall, and bring back an answer. Give it to him personally. If he is not at leisure wait till you can see him and don't leave without an answer."

"Yes, sir."

The young man vanished and they heard him shut the door of the outer office, but the detective was not satisfied until he had seen with his own eyes that the room was empty.

"Well, sir," he said reseating himself. "What am I to do?"

"The case is this," said Laford. "Years ago when I was young and foolish I got into an entanglement with a woman."

"Yes," said the detective, as the millionaire paused; and the flush on his face deepened.

"She was a servant in my father's house, a rather good-looking young woman and very much liked by my sisters. We couldn't afford a lady's maid for each of them so she attended to both. She was very quiet and well-mannered, and clever at dressmaking. After she left us she set up as a dressmaker. I kept up my acquaintance with her after she left the house and finally, well, it ended the usual way."

"A baby?" queried the detective.

The great man's hands grasped the arms of his chair convulsively, and his teeth were set hard. With difficulty he managed to answer "Exactly so."

To the man whose business it was to pick over the ash-heaps of immorality, the seduction of a dressmaker was no great matter, and it was with considerable inward amusement, though with an immovable face, that he watched the other's emotion.

"Well?" he said inquiringly. "What else?"

"That was twenty years ago, and the boy has grown up. I have just received a letter from his mother. Perhaps you had better read it."

Laford handed the letter to his companion who read it attentively. "What grudge has the young fellow got against you?" he inquired.

"None that I know of, except neglecting him. You see the thing made me lots of trouble and I was very much disgusted with the whole business."

Everything came out, my father stormed, my mother cried, and my sisters wouldn't speak to me for a month. The girl was always red-eyed and snivelling and reproachful, and so I rather suddenly left for Europe till the thing should blow over. I stayed away a year and as she didn't look me up I naturally didn't look her up. In fact, I didn't know whether the child lived or died. And as time went on I pretty much forgot all about it. I know my father paid the woman something regularly as long as he lived. But after he died I didn't keep it up. You see I didn't have very pleasant memories connected with the affair, and I wanted to get rid of it entirely. She never made any complaint and I was willing to let a sleeping dog lie. But now, d—— it! (starting from his chair) the thing is all stirred up again."

"I don't think there is much danger, sir," said the detective soothingly. "Boys of twenty are apt to say a good deal but they don't generally do much."

"You haven't heard all yet. Yesterday as I was driving home I saw, leaning against the gate, a young fellow who looked at me as if he wanted to kill me. That same young fellow afterwards followed and insulted my daughter. What do you think of that?"

"Looks more serious."

"What I want you to do is to find him. See where he lives, and so on; especially find out all you can about his character. Afterwards I'll see what can be done."

"I should advise you, sir, to look out meanwhile

for your personal safety. Three or four of our men, properly posted, could quietly prevent any attempt on your life, without any one ever supposing that you were guarded. How does that strike you?"

"Send for as many as you think necessary, and take all the precautions you think advisable, but mind this. I am and will be a free man. I will go where I please and when I please. If your men can protect me, well and good. If not, I'll take the risk, but I'll not be bound by rules and regulations."

"They'll do their best, sir, to see that no harm is done you. Will you please describe the young man who looked at you yesterday," continued the detective, after a short pause.

"He was a tall fellow, with rather good features, black eyes, dark hair. He was quietly dressed in clothes of some dark color. He wore a black derby hat, and carried his hands in his pockets. That is about all I remember."

"Do you know whether he has any trade?"

"No, but we can find that out from his mother."

"I'll write to her about it. I'll take down her address now."

There was a pause while the detective copied the address into his note-book. When he had finished he rose.

"Well, sir," he said, "I don't think I need know anything further. In a day or two I shall have run the fox to his hole and then I will report to you. You have no further instructions, I suppose?"

"None at present."

"I am stopping at the Central Hotel. A letter

sent there will reach me as soon as I come in. If I should happen to meet you anywhere outside we are not supposed to know each other."

The detective bowed and took his departure.

First he went to the telegraph office and wired for four of his men to come by the next train, and then made his way to St. Joseph's Place.

While resting himself on a rustic seat in the Laford grounds a liveried servant approached him, across the lawn. He rose to meet the man.

"You want to know what I'm doing here?" he said coolly.

"Why, yes," answered the astonished lackey.

"I see you are an intelligent fellow and know how to keep your mouth shut when you ought to. Well, I'm a walking delegate of the Nailmakers' Union. I have business with your boss and I am going to see him. I'm not speaking for myself but for the Union, and you know it don't do for any one to interfere with the business of the Union. But you don't want to talk about this with all the other help."

The man hesitated for a moment and then returned to the house, and the detective resumed his seat.

He kept within sight of the house until six o'clock, but the man he was looking for did not appear.

About six o'clock Laford drove up the avenue. The detective arose and intercepted him. The rich man pulled up his horse.

"Well?" he said.

Mr. Steelyard was an honest man in his way, but his way was often dark and crooked. Truth he val-

ued highly in its place, and he did not consider this the place. If he should acknowledge that he had found out absolutely nothing his employer might injure his own interests by handing over the case to some other man of less acuteness; therefore, as a faithful employee, he was bound to protect Mr. Laford against himself by telling a lie; and this he did:

“I know where he lives. It is somewhere in Rathburn Street, but I don’t yet know in just what part. You see I knew he’d come here, so I laid for him. He did come, hung around awhile and went away. I followed him to Rathburn Street, but just then a great gang of hands came pouring out of the Locus Works and up the street, to dinner. Somehow I lost him in the crowd. I hung about for four hours, but he didn’t show up again. It isn’t often we have such luck just in the very beginning, so I thought I’d come and tell you.”

“But how do you know that he lives in Rathburn Street?”

Mr. Steelyard smiled.

“I can’t explain it, sir,” he said, “but I always know when a man is in the street where he lives. There is a something or other—I don’t know what it is—I never thought what it was—but it’s there, and I know it when I see it.”

“All right. I am glad to hear what you have told me.”

“And just remember, please, that your servant thinks I’m a walking delegate of the Nailmakers’ Union.”

“You told him that, did you?”

"Yes, to put him off the scent. We mustn't let our man get wind of what we are up to."

"Very well."

The interview terminated, and the detective went to his hotel, revolving various plans in his mind. He was confident that by patiently hanging about the Laford mansion he would find his man, but he was afraid to make the millionaire wait for any such slow process. At last a brilliant thought struck him, which he resolved to put into effect next morning. Meanwhile he did not neglect to keep a sharp eye on Mr. Laford's house during the greater part of the evening. About midnight he returned to his hotel.

As he passed the smoking room he saw four men playing cards. He entered and watched the game.

After awhile he said to the man nearest to him, pointing to the cards as he spoke :

"Do you know where Mr. Laford's house is?"

"No; but I can find out."

"You're to go there as soon as possible and watch for a tall young man with dark hair. Thelluson will go with you. You two can go to bed. Report at seven o'clock to-morrow morning in this room, playing cards."

* * * * *

The man who was being looked for had spent the day in searching for employment. At evening he returned to his boarding house, tired but successful. He was to go to work next day in the great screw factory, known as the Locus Works. As this factory was situated in Locustown, he informed his landlady

that he should move at the end of the week. He would have moved sooner, but that he had paid in advance.

He was tired, having walked more than thirteen miles that day, and he went to bed about nine o'clock, never imagining that two detectives were guarding the Laford mansion against him.

The Locus Works, where Nomanson was to try his hand in the morning, had been built by William Locus, inventor of the famous screw which bears his name. A Philadelphian by birth, he had set up his factory opposite to New Manchester in the days before the war, and collected around it a settlement of operatives. When the place was organized as a town his name was given to it, having already been given by local parlance, for a number of years. He had been dead some time, and his property had passed into the hands of a corporation in which his only child, Lucy, was by far the largest stock-holder. Locus-town boasted of some twenty nine thousand inhabitants, almost all of the poorer sort, and four-fifths of them foreigners. During the life of Mr. Locus, the house which he had built, not far from his factory, had continued to be the family residence. But soon after his death it had been pulled down and a row of small, mean brick houses built in its place, as dwellings for the operatives.

Miss Locus had been very much dissatisfied with her father's persistency in living on the north side of the river and, after his death, had taken a magnificent house near Mr. Laford's. Here she was a centre of attraction to the managing mammas with

marriageable sons, for she was the greatest catch in all New Manchester.

Meanwhile, Mr. Laford had replied to his former mistress as follows :

NEW MANCHESTER, Aug. 16.

"I have received your letter. I have taken measures to have your son arrested. If successful, he shall be sent back to you. In any case, no danger need be apprehended. He is a foolish boy who will come to his senses when he finds the impossibility of carrying out his absurd threats.

JOHN C. LAFORD."

CHAPTER V.

THE next morning at seven o'clock, Nomanson reported at the Locus Works and was handed over to a foreman and set to work. As a nailer he had been a skilled workman, but this business was new to him. However, he was intelligent and quick-fingered, so he soon acquired the knack of his work.

Nomanson was so much interested in his new occupation that he scarcely saw or heard anything around him. At last, having become familiar with the work he had to do, he became less intent upon it and looked about him. Just opposite, a pair of sparkling brown eyes were watching him from under a curly tangle of dark brown hair; their owner had a saucy mouth, and was clad in an old black dress which had been stylish in days gone by.

Their eyes met only for a moment. Then the young man was obliged to look down again at his work. Several times during the morning he caught her eye, always with the same expression; pert, good-natured, challenging. She understood her work better than he understood his, and his glance fell before hers each time. At last, he became annoyed by her persistent scrutiny and, stopping his work, he fixed his eyes on hers and kept them there until she spoke.

“ Well, young man, you’ll know me when you see me again, won’t you? ”

Her voice was high, sharp and clear, penetrating the roar of machinery with perfect distinctness.

"I won't know you as well as you'll know me, from the way you've been looking at me for the last hour or so."

"What a story. I haven't looked at you once till just now."

The girl cast down her eyes and continued her work, and Nomanson followed her example.

Before long he heard her voice again.

"Say, young man!"

He looked up with a frown; for he was giving all his thought to his work just then, in spite of another set of thoughts that had been whirling round and round in his brain for the last few days, like one of the great factory wheels, and was trying to intrude itself into working hours.

"Oh! my gracious! don't look so cross."

He did not look any the more pleasant on account of this appeal. However, she was not to be daunted and she went on:

"What's your name?"

The frown changed to a peculiar smile, not more agreeable to see.

"Nomanson," he answered.

"Oh! Mine is Lizzie Simpson, and as you're such a nice, polite young man you can call me Lizzie if you like. What's your first name?"

"John," he answered, in a sullen tone and resumed his work, not to be interrupted again until the twelve o'clock whistle blew.

Nomanson went out with the crowd, glad to be

able, without neglecting his work, to think of the one subject that above all others absorbed his mind. He had taken off his coat when beginning work; and, with it over his arm, he was walking towards a small restaurant where he proposed to get his dinner. A stream of other operatives set in the same direction. Suddenly he heard his name called from behind him.

“Mr. Nomanson!”

He stopped and saw Lizzie Simpson running after him; holding up her shabby dress with one hand and carrying a tin lunch box in the other.

“Do you live near here?” she said, as she joined him.

“No, I live across the river.”

“I saw you hadn’t any lunch, and I thought you might have forgotten to bring any. I have more than I want, and so—why if you want some I’d be very glad to share with you.”

“Thank you, I couldn’t think of it. I am just going to get some dinner.”

“There is plenty for both of us,” said the girl, looking disappointed.

“You don’t know how voracious men are. All that you have brought probably wouldn’t be half enough for me.”

“Well, if your appetite is as big as the words you use, maybe not. But, really there is plenty.”

“I couldn’t think of it, possibly.”

“Oh, well, obstinate! Go your own way then,” she said pettishly, and turned back towards the factory.

"Got a new mash, eh! Liz," said a young man as she passed him.

"Yes, and I can get a better looking fellow than you every time," she answered.

Nomanson got a dinner that satisfied his appetite for fifteen cents, and afterwards strolled around, unconscious of the heat and glare and dust. He was thinking of one subject, so absorbing that externals amounted to little. He frowned when the whistle called him back to the factory, and he felt himself compelled once more to give his mind to his work.

Lizzie was in her place before he reached his. She had nothing to say to him that afternoon, for she resented his refusal to share her dinner, and beside she knew that too much attention from her was liable to defeat its own object. A little judicious indifference was what the young man needed now, she thought.

Nomanson was oblivious of her indifference: in fact of her existence. His work, and the continual fight against that one obtrusive thought claimed his whole attention. But, when the six o'clock whistle blew, he became aware of her presence once more, and it struck him that it was worth while to cultivate her acquaintance. Accustomed as he was to the manners of factory girls, her forwardness did not in any way prejudice him against her. She had taken a fancy to him and she wanted to know him and be friendly with him. That was all her conduct meant, probably. If so, her friendship might be useful.

"Well, my dear," he said, turning to her and smiling, "work is over now. Can I see you home?"

"Why, yes, if you like," she answered, returning his smile. "I'll be very glad."

They went out together with the crowd. Lizzie had determined to play a quiet rôle for the present. In fact, she was puzzled by her companion's conduct. At first she had thought him shy, then disagreeable, but now he had turned out to be neither.

After a while Nomanson inquired:

"Do you live near here?"

"No, about half a mile up from the river. Let me see; yes, its eleven blocks."

"Do you live with your family?"

"Oh! no. I ain't got any. My father and mother died when I was little, and my old aunt set me to work when I was thirteen, and she was so hateful I ran away from her, and since then I've boarded around."

"I'm living over in New Manchester now, but I want to change so as to get nearer my work."

"You'd better come to our house, then. It's very good and you can go up in the top story with two other men and they'll only charge you three dollars and a half a week."

"I think I'll do that."

"That will be real nice." Presently she asked:

"You won't be mad at me if I ask you a funny question?"

"Oh! no, not at all."

"Why did you look so cross when I asked you your first name?"

A vestige of the scowl came, unconsciously, into the young man's face as he answered :

"Because it's the name of a man I hate and it was given to me by a woman I hate."

"Who is that woman that you hate?"

"Don't let us talk about her. It stirs up unpleasant memories."

After a while Lizzie broke the silence again by saying :

"Have you been here long?"

"No, only a few days. I just came on from New York."

"Oh! that's a big city. New Manchester must look small to you. They say New York is an awful wicked city."

"It's bad enough."

"I hope you're good."

"I'm not especially bad."

"But you're hard-hearted and unforgiving. I'll have to be mighty careful."

"That's right," he said, laughing. "Mind your p's and q's."

"That's just like you men;—you're always wanting to boss us around; but you're a good fellow after all. I can see it in your face. I think we shall be first-rate friends. Will you come in?" she asked, when they had reached her home.

"Yes, I'll come in and see the person who keeps the house."

The girl disappeared for a minute, when she returned with a stout, red faced woman in a calico dress.

"You want board here, mister?" inquired the latter.

"Yes."

"Walk right up-stairs and I'll show you the only place I have vacant."

She led the way and the two young people followed. Lizzie stopped at a door on the second story.

"Here's my room," she said, with a nod and smile; "I'll see you again to-morrow morning." And Nomanson went on to the third story. Here, the woman showed him into a front room.

After some haggling, a bargain was concluded, and the young man made his way to his lodging in New Manchester.

Meanwhile Mr. John Laford, driving homeward along St. Joseph's Place, drew up at the side of the road on recognizing the detective.

"Ah! Mr. Steelyard, What have you found out since I saw you last?"

"He's a deep one," answered the detective. "When he had time to think over it, he saw that he'd gone rather too far and was frightened. He's left town and the woman who boards him says he's gone for a week. One of my men is shadowing him and I shall get a telegram this evening saying just where he is. But I suppose you don't want anything done till he comes back?"

"No, but don't let him escape you."

"Trust us for that. Any further instructions?"

"Not at present."

The detective followed the wagon to the corner of the Laford place. A thick clump of bushes and

trees grew just there. Mr. Steelyard turned his back on it, put his hands in his pockets, and began to whistle "Sweet Violets."

In less than a minute a ragged man came out of the bushes, jumped down from the low wall and came up to him.

"Ain't seen anything to-day," remarked the ragged man in a low tone.

"Where's George?"

"Around at the back of the house, pickin' currants."

"Well, keep a sharp lookout. If he don't come to-day he'll come to-morrow, and if he don't come to-morrow he'll come next day. Did George have to tell Laford who he was?"

"No, he saw the madam, and she said she'd give him work every day till the currants is picked and then find him something else."

"Good woman, that. Well, so' long."

The detective-in-chief sauntered away, and his subordinate returned to his ambush.

CHAPTER VI.

IT was the afternoon of the next day.

Miss Lucy Locus, the richest woman in New Manchester, was seated in a low garden chair on her lawn, under the shade of some fine young maples. There was a sad lack of full-grown shade trees in New Manchester, for the primeval forests had been destroyed, and, until lately, no effort worthy of the name had been made to replace them. Of late years, innumerable trees had been planted in St. Joseph's Place, and in the grounds of the residences on both sides, and they were growing well, but still Miss Locus' maples were the admiration and envy of all the first families of New Manchester.

Two empty chairs stood near the young lady and a novel and some fancy work lay on the ground beside her. She was sitting with her hands clasped idly in her lap, and her eyes gazing fixedly at nothing. She was a slender young woman of twenty-three or thereabouts; her face was pale and freckled; her eyes light gray; her hair and eyelashes the color of straw; her hands and feet small and well-shaped. She wore a white muslin dress of the finest material, a marvel of the dressmaker's art; and on her head was a white straw hat ornamented with a blue ribbon and white feathers. The sunlight sifting through the foliage above her, flashed and sparkled in the gems that adorned her white slim fingers. A pug

with a silver collar lay at her feet, fast asleep, with his black nose on a corner of her dress.

“A pretty picture,” thought the Rev. Ambrose Stylysh, rector of St. Joseph’s Church, as he sauntered past the house on his way to pay a parochial visit.

“A very nice girl, and a very good girl, and if I was in his place I would jump at the chance.”

Yes, it was a very pretty picture, but he for whom it had all been arranged was not there to admire it. He had promised to be there, but he was “a laggard in love,” apparently; and, had the rector been near enough, he would have seen that the young lady’s face was troubled, and would have heard her sigh; as, for the tenth time, she drew out her little watch with its diamond monogram.

“Five o’clock,” she murmured. “How provoking. I wonder what detains him.”

Whatever it was it failed to detain him much longer. In less than five minutes he appeared, and came towards her, a tall figure in clothes of faultless cut: swinging a gold-headed cane as he walked leisurely over the velvet turf.

The young lady’s eyes followed his movements with eager interest, until, as he came close to her, he looked up and their glances met. He lifted his hat and smiled; she colored, looked down, and murmured some indistinct words of greeting. He replaced his straw hat for a moment, then threw it down, and stretched himself on the grass beside her.

“Oh! Mr. Laford,” she cried in alarm. “You mustn’t lie on the grass, it’s damp here under the

trees, and you'll catch cold. See, here's a nice comfortable chair for you. Do get up."

"Let me lie here, like a dear girl," he answered, looking up at her, and smiling lazily.

"Oh! do as you like. You're just too obstinate for anything. I'm sure *I* can't do anything with you. How I do pity the woman that's going to be your wife."

She said it bravely, but her voice trembled just a little at that last word. A shade of annoyance came over the young man's face and he looked away to conceal it.

This young woman had been a source of great perplexity to him during the past few months; and another young woman had made the perplexity still worse. He knew that Lucy was ready to give him herself and her fortune if he chose to ask; and he wanted her fortune, but he did *not* want her. Should he, or should he not? That was the question that disturbed his peace of mind. If he could have been sure that she would wait indefinitely; but girls were fickle; gold-hunters numerous and wily. She was worth a million, that he was sure of; and to see a million, or may be even more, slip through his fingers just through not speaking—

"If Vi and Lucy could only change places," he thought as he lay at the heiress' feet with his face turned from her, "how simple the whole thing would be. But, pshaw! what a fool I am. I am only nineteen and I won't think about it any more."

He had made that resolution many times, but had never been able to keep it.

Miss Locus broke in upon his reverie by saying reproachfully :

“ I suppose it’s hardly worth while going to drive, it’s so late. I had the ponies harnessed at four o’clock, but it’s past five now.”

“ I’m awfully sorry, but you see I was at Cnarley Walsh’s last night with a lot of the fellows, and I didn’t get home till daylight, and after lunch I was rather tired and lay down for awhile, telling my man to call me at half-past three, and the infernal block-head swears I said half-past four. It’s nonsense of course, but what is one to do ? ”

“ You can’t rely on servants a bit.”

“ No, of course not. They’re all a worthless lazy set of fools, but we can’t get along without them, so I suppose there’s nothing to be done but grin and bear it.”

“ It’s very provoking. Our ride is just spoiled.”

“ I don’t care much. I’d just as lief lie here.”

But just then the sound of wheels was heard and the phaeton appeared. When it was actually before their eyes they concluded that it was better late than never, and made their way slowly to the house.

On the piazza steps appeared a fat, elderly, over-dressed woman with her arms full of shawls. Laford lifted his hat and received a very gracious bow in return.

“ Really, auntie, I don’t want so many wraps,” protested Lucy. “ One will be quite enough.”

“ Nonsense,” was the reply. “ One ain’t half enough. I tell you now, when you’re aridin’ home

in the evenin' air with them creeturs agoin' fast like that young man always makes 'em go, if you ain't wrapped up warm you'll just catch your death o' cold, and don't you forget it."

"Well, put them in behind, under the seat, please. Dear me, how impatient the ponies are! You must drive, Mr. Laford. I could never hold them."

"Lord! how them creeturs do cut up," said the aunt. "Do be careful now, young man, and don't bring her back with her neck broke."

"I'll be careful, Mrs. Smith. All right, Thomas."

The negro groom let go the ponies' heads, and off they went with a plunge. But young Laford's muscles were strong, and he kept them well under control.

They went down the drive at a high-stepping trot, and swung into St. Joseph's Place. They had gone only a short distance when they saw a light wagon drawn by a pair of horses coming rapidly towards them. Its occupants proved to be Mr. and Mrs. Laford. The former smiled as he returned the greeting of the young people and when they had passed he said to his wife in a well-satisfied tone: "Victor seems to have a sure thing there."

"My dear, you wouldn't want him to marry her?"

"Why not? Are you one of those matrons:

'Ever on the watch
To mar a son's or make a daughter's match.'

"He is entirely too young and you know that he doesn't care for her."

"He is young, I grant you. As to whether he is

too young, that is a matter that will mend itself. But why do you suppose that he doesn't care for her? I think she's a very nice girl."

"So she is, but—I don't know—I can't tell you why he doesn't care for her, but I know he doesn't."

"But how do you know?"

"She's older than he is, and she isn't pretty."

"She's not bad looking."

"I can't convince you, of course; but I should be very sorry to see them married; for her sake and his, for I know he doesn't love her."

"You're a queer woman. I wonder if there is another like you in the world. Any mother in New Manchester would be delighted to see her boy riding with Lucy Locus."

"I think you are wrong. Women are not all as mercenary as you suppose, and I, for one, am sure that there is no true happiness in a mercenary marriage."

She spoke with deep feeling and her husband's face clouded.

"By which you mean," he said, "that you know too much ever to wish your son to make the same mistake that you did. Thank you, for reminding me that ours was not a love match."

"John," reproachfully, "I am sure I had no such idea."

"To my mind, our experience ought to teach us that what you call mercenary marriages are the best sort. There are no dreams to wake up from, no illusions to be dispelled. It is a fair trade and both parties satisfied. That is, they ought to be. If they

choose to enter into the contract, they should have their eyes open."

"I hope Victor will have his eyes wide enough open not to marry a woman whom he does not love. I should be very sorry to believe him a mere man of the world absorbed in money-making and the pleasures that money will buy."

"Like his father."

"John, you are unkind. I meant no such accusation."

"Very well. But really, my dear Elizabeth, you and I are talking very foolishly."

The tone in which Mr. Laford said this showed that he meant the conversation to end there, and so it did.

About the same time Miss Violet was perched on the railing surrounding the piazza of her uncle's house and was holding forth to her cousin, seated opposite, in a low easy chair, fanning herself.

"I think it is positively indecent in that Lucy Locus to throw herself at Victor's head as she does."

"The poor girl is desperately in love with him. I don't know that I blame her so very much."

"That's no excuse. If I was ever so much in love with a man I'd never——"

Lillian had been looking at the gold sticks of her fan as they swayed slowly back and forward. At the last words she lifted her eyes and looked straight at her cousin with a suspicion of a smile. Violet stopped short and blushed.

"You don't know what you might do, my dear, if you were in love," said Miss Laford.

“ You—you mean something more than you say. You *surely* don’t think that *I* am in love with Victor.”

“ Of course not.”

“ I love Victor just as you do, and if I’ve been a little more demonstrative than you, it is only because of the difference in our dispositions. I do love Victor, and for that reason I should be sorry to see him throw himself away on such an utterly uninteresting girl as Lucy Locus.”

“ But, my dear, think of the money in the case.”

“ Oh! Lily, how can you?”

“ Why, I think it is my duty as a loving sister, anxious to advance my brother’s interests —”

“ Now, stop. You’re only saying that to tease me. You know you’d be awfully sorry to see him marry her.”

“ I don’t think so. We’d both of us be bridesmaids —”

“ I won’t hear another word.”

Violet jumped down from the railing and boxed her cousin’s ears. No other of her acquaintances would have dared to treat the haughty Miss Laford with such familiarity, or would have come off with impunity if they had; but the great man’s daughter only smiled, and drew her cousin into her lap, saying:

“ You naughty little puss, how dare you?”

“ Only forgive me this once and I’ll never do so any more,” pleaded the culprit, clasping her hands, and looking imploringly into her cousin’s face.

“ But I’ve forgiven you seventy times seven already, you wicked little darling.”

"Oh! no. Only sixty-seven times seven. I know because I counted yesterday."

"Well, then, just this once. But positively this is the last time."

They exchanged kisses, and Violet twined her arms around her companion's neck and laid her cheek against her forehead. For a while they sat in silence, till suddenly Lily was startled by feeling a hot tear run down her temple.

"My dear," she exclaimed. "What is the matter?"

"Nothing."

"But you're crying."

"Crying? You dear precious goose, what should I have to cry about, I should like to know. My eyes have been weak ever since that horrible dust going over to the heights this morning. I was half-choked and half-blinded, and I don't know how William ever managed to see to drive. Oh! here come aunt and uncle."

The wagon turned in and came up to the door. Violet ran down the steps to kiss her aunt and uncle as they alighted. Lillian followed more slowly. She kissed her mother, but before lifting her face to her father she looked up hesitatingly to make sure that he cared to bestow a caress upon her. After a moment's glance she turned away. Laford had received Violet's embrace indulgently, but was evidently in no mood for more of the same kind.

"Never mind, Charles," said Laford to a servant who came to take the horses. "I'll drive them to

the stable myself, I want to speak to William. Is he there?"

"Yes, sir. I seen him there a little while ago, washin' the big carriage."

"May I go, too, Uncle John?" asked Violet.

"Oh! yes, certainly."

She took the reins and Mrs. Laford watched them until they had turned the corner of the house.

"What should we do without that sweet child?" she said, turning to her daughter.

"I don't know."

"I hope some day she will marry Victor."

A quick flash of intelligence passed between the two women. Mrs. Laford continued:

"Of course they are both too young to think of anything of the sort for some years to come, but I hope I shall live to see them married."

The daughter said nothing, but looked out over the lawn, and fanned herself in her calm, deliberate fashion. Finding that she made no answer, her mother sighed and went into the house.

* * * * *

On Saturday evening, as they parted at the door of the factory, Lizzie asked Nomanson what he intended to do to-morrow, and invited him to tea and to accompany her to church in the evening.

He promised to do so and walked on towards the river. Friendless, in a strange place, his mind filled with dark thoughts of hatred and revenge, this good-natured, good-looking girl was a pleasant thing to see and hear; and he thought of her for a few minutes after leaving her. Then he plunged into the

black maelstrom of thoughts that usually engulfed his leisure hours.

Round and round they went in his brain ; schemes, projects and hopes ;—perpetually recurring. Strikes, riots, ruin, death ; but not *his* death whom the thinker hated. “No,” he said to himself, “it is not John Laford’s *life* that I want. He must know who struck him, and he must live and wish himself dead. He gave me a life that I hate, and I will take from him one that he loves. But *does* he love him ? He cares nothing for me, and I am—(He set his teeth hard and did not finish his sentence in words). Perhaps he is so selfish that he does not even care for *him*. But he is *proud* of him,—the heir, the only son, the bearer of his father’s name.” A passing child looked up in his face in half amazement, half terror. “He will feel that, he will be struck hard there, and if God—or the devil—gives me a chance, I’ll strike him.” He ceased to think articulately then, but still the same thoughts came and went in a perpetual whirl.

Suddenly a fiend seemed to get control of his mind and compel him to listen to the words “Why wait ? Do the business at once and have it over with. Are you a coward that you fear the vengeance of the law ? Take the law into your own hands. Strike, and laugh at the consequences. A pistol and a box of matches, that is all you need, and the gallows cannot cheat you out of your revenge.” But he crushed that thought down and answered the tempter as he had many a time before : “I fear not death ; but disgrace. I have lived and will die an

honest and honorable man. I will never commit a crime."

The standard by which he judged of what constitutes a crime was the *workman's* standard. Of the *judge's* standard he knew little and cared less. Strikes, and riots in support of strikes, were to him sacred rights of American free laborers. To die fighting ~~and~~ soldiery and police was to him as honorable as falling in battle in defence of his country. The Revolution he regarded as a huge riot in which Washington was the ringleader, and he honored him on that account.

He spent the next morning in reading a Sunday paper and stopping at intervals to meditate on his great purpose. About four o'clock he went out as the church bells were beginning to ring. First one began, mellowed by distance, far off in Locustown. Presently a great brick and slate spire, just ahead of him, sent forth a harsh and resounding clang. Then, from the heights beyond, came a clear, melodious chime.

He listened for a moment, as the bells above him struck the notes of "Adeste fideles." "That must be the Episcopal Church," he thought. "I suppose most of the fashionables have made their weekly duty call on God, this morning. However, I will go and see if I can catch a glimpse of some of my dear relatives. I have not seen any of them for nearly a week."

He turned into a street bordered by wooden cottages, shaded by maple and elm trees, a quiet, respectable, sleepy looking street, with only one inhab-

itant in sight,—a young man, seated on a rustic bench in a front yard, smoking a big pipe and reading a paper covered book. On reaching St. Joseph's Place, he walked slowly in the direction from which the sound of the chimes had come. He passed a lawn, smooth as velvet, inclosed in an ornate iron fence. Then another, equally well kept, but additionally embellished with brilliant flower beds, and without any barrier towards the street. Next came the low stone wall surrounding the grounds of Mr. Laford.

No one seemed to be stirring. The blinds of all the windows, except one, were closed. He folded his arms and stood gazing intently for a few minutes. A man, leaning over a fence on the opposite side of the street, watched him with equal intentness. When he walked on again the man's eyes followed.

He went on until he reached the church, a small but handsome Gothic building, of gray and white stone. The chimes had ceased. He walked a little beyond and then retraced his steps. The chimes began again; and after he had passed he began to meet the worshipers, mostly women, in summer silks and white lawns. He passed them singly and in parties, but knew none of them. Mechanically, he had followed his usual Sunday morning custom and dressed himself in his best clothes, but they recognized him easily as one not of their sort, and wondered what he was doing there, away from the ordinary haunts of his class.

At the Laford place he stopped at the fence, on the other side of which was the man who had been and

was still watching him. The man was plainly dressed, and was thin, dark and short, with a straggling black moustache and short black hair.

A carriage was standing before Mr. Laford's house ; three ladies came out and entered it. The carriage drove off in the direction of the church.

Nomanson still waited. The chimes ceased and the street became deserted. At last he, too, turned his steps that way, and the watcher followed him.

The door of the church was open, and a fat negro, in a white vest and black frock-coat, stood beside it. The music began, and he went in. He respected religion and disliked the idea of entering a church for any other purpose than worship ; but his desire to see more was too strong. The black man eyed him superciliously. He, too, recognized not only a stranger, but one of a different order from the worshipers at St. Joseph's.

The sudden change from the outside glare to the half-lighted interior blinded him at first. Then he made out white walls and stained windows, a brass lecturn, a white marble altar, and high black walnut pews. On one side of the chancel stood the white-robed rector. The music had ceased and the psalter for the day was being given out. All over the church fans were waving ;—silk, satin, linen, paper, palm leaf. The voice of the minister ceased, and there was silence, broken only by the rustling of leaves, as the congregation looked through their prayer books for the appointed psalms. Then the deep, monotonous voice of the minister was heard again as he began the reading.

Leaning against the wall of the church, unnoticed, the young man looked over the congregation, and presently his eye lighted on what he sought, three figures occupying a central pew. He recognized them all, but one riveted his attention, a tall, graceful form in white, with pale gold hair coiled under her dainty straw hat. As he watched her a small thin man entered the church and stood on the other side of the door. Absorbed in watching Miss Laford, Nomanson failed to notice him. Neither did he notice the words of the minister for awhile.

Suddenly he started and was all attention. Was it a message from God or the devil, or did his ears deceive him? In regard to the last question he could make sure. He leaned over the pew in front of him and took a prayer book from the rack. In the psalter he read :

“I will follow upon mine enemies and overtake them ; neither will I turn again till I have destroyed them.”

He had seen and heard enough. He put back the prayer book and went out into the open air, scarcely knowing whither he went, trying to systematize the thoughts that were whirling in his brain. It was useless ; he could only repeat that sentence over and over. He seemed to see it before him in letters of blood-red light.

The small, thin man was following him.

At last he found himself opposite to the now familiar low wall, and the great white house beyond the smooth-shaven lawn.

A young man was on the piazza, seated in a rock-

ing chair, with his feet on another, reading and smoking. For a while Nomanson seemed fascinated. Then he roused himself and started for his own lodging. As he entered, the small man with the black hair was not far off on the opposite side of the street.

Nomanson remained in his room until five o'clock, and then made his way to Lizzie Simpson's lodging, where the landlady admitted him and invited him to "walk right up stairs."

The door of Miss Simpson's room was open and the young lady herself seated in a shabby rocking chair by an open window overlooking a "back-yard." She heard his step on the uncarpeted floor of the hall, and came forward to meet him smiling, and with her hand extended. Another girl occupied the other window. Lizzie introduced them and offered him a chair.

Miss Armagh, Lizzie's roommate, was a snub-nosed, freckled young woman, with an immense capacity for keeping quiet. Nomanson was not especially talkative, but Lizzie said enough for all three. She never allowed the conversation to flag until a bell rang and she requested her visitor to "come down to supper."

The supper was not very good. The meat was tough and the bread was stale, but Nomanson scarcely noticed what he was eating. After they had finished Lizzie chattered until it was time for church. Lizzie invited her roommate to go with them, but she preferred to stay at home.

"She's a Catholic, you see," said Lizzie, as they went down-stairs, "and dreadful bigoted, and she won't go to any church but her own."

"Where are we going?" inquired Nomanson.

"I generally go to the Congregational church. I like Mr. Torrent ever so much."

The church was of brick with a white wooden tower. It stood upon Turnpike Avenue, and was a relic of former days, when New Manchester was a country village. The minister was tall, with a big mouth and a big voice. He whined through the prayers in a way that suggested a terrified dog crawling to the feet of a stern master. But when the sermon, the "*piece de resistance*" of the evening came, he yelled and whispered, threatened and entreated, flung his arms about and walked up and down in a manner that held his audience "spell-bound."

After leaving the church Lizzie asked him how he liked the discourse. He answered that it was very good orthodox theology, and that the music was good; which appeared to satisfy her.

When, in turn, he asked her how *she* liked the sermon, she "thought it was splendid."

"What did you like particularly?"

"Oh! I don't remember anything in particular, but I thought the whole sermon was splendid."

Here they were overtaken by Tom Hartley, a male friend of Lizzie's, who had been to the Methodist church but who could give no better synopsis of Dr. Rumbler's sermon than "'Blow, ye priests of the Lord with silver trumpets,' and a lot besides; you ought to go and hear him. I tell you, it's fine."

Nomanson concluded that further attempts to extract information would be useless, and Lizzie, usu-

ally so voluble, was apparently unable to think of anything to say, so they walked on in silence until they reached the wooden bridge. Then Lizzie spoke:

“Good-night, Tom,” she said. “We turn off here, and I suppose you go straight on.”

“I ain’t got nothing particular to do. I’ll walk over home with you.”

“You’re real good, but I couldn’t think of giving you so much trouble. Mr. Nomanson will take me home.”

“Ain’t no trouble at all.”

Arrived at the house, Lizzie said “good-night” to both, and after a private, half-suppressed smile to Nomanson, went in. He went homewards, leaving Hartley standing on the sidewalk gazing vacantly at the upper windows.

CHAPTER VII.

ON Monday Miss Locus gave a tennis party. It was a sort of return match given by the St. Joseph Club to the Dreadnought Club, the two crack tennis societies of New Manchester. Miss Sally Heriott, president of the Dreadnoughts had given a party at her house the week before, and covered herself and her club with glory. This glory the St. Josephs were determined to dim and, if possible, extinguish.

Miss Locus' tennis ground was on the right of the house and was as perfect as care and money could make it. So too was the repast, which occupied a polished mahogany table on the right of the tennis ground and was presided over by an equally polished "colored gentleman" in yellow and black livery. Over this refection Miss Locus' aunt, in spite of the young lady's expostulations, had exerted herself immensely, and was very tired and red in the face when the guests began to arrive.

The former match had been, so to speak, an undress affair, the clubs being newly organized and the uniforms not all ready; but on this occasion all the members were in full uniform, and the white and blue of the St. Josephs and the blue and crimson of the Dreadnought's were picturesquely mingled under the trees, as they waited for the game to begin; sipping, meanwhile, lemonade and champagne; though

the sensible players indulged very sparingly in the latter.

Victor Laford, president of the St. Josephs, arrived late, but then he was always late. His father and sister had been there for some time, but they were always early, so no one was surprised. Neither was any one surprised at seeing the cherubic face and curly hair of Miss Eversley beside the tall figure of the heir of the Lafords.

"We've been waiting for you," cried Miss Locus, too excited to be as shy as usual, when the laggards appeared. "We were just beginning without you."

"You're awfully good not to," said Laford, lazily. "Well, we won't waste any more time. Have you got your couple chosen, Miss Heriott?"

"No, we're waiting to see who you are going to put in the field against us."

"All right, we're not afraid of you. We'll choose our first two players by lot. Who has got some paper?" Then seeing that no one responded: "Never mind; grass will do."

The choice was made and Miss Locus, to her mingled apprehension and delight, found herself matched with young Laford.

The enemy produced two opponents on their side: Miss Maria White, a fresh-colored, well developed girl, a junior at Vassar; and Mr. James Longworth, a rawboned Harvard senior, a famous athlete, but at tennis only a half-trained recruit; standing six feet in his stockings.

The racquet was tossed, and the Dreadnoughts won. They, or rather Miss White, chose the serve,

and the young lady decided to act as server, not altogether trusting her partner, and wishing to begin with as much éclat as possible. In a tremor of nervous agitation, Miss Locus took her position as striker-out.

Miss White stood for a moment gauging the distance, then her voice was heard, clear as a church bell, and as she cried "play" the ball went over the net, straight and swift as a swallow. Miss Locus, standing too near the service line, struck at the ball wildly and missed it. The voice of the referee was heard saying in a monotonously indifferent tone "Fifteen-love."

The players took their positions and the young lady from Vassar measured the ground with her eye more carefully than before. When she did send the ball she tried so hard to make it a "crawler" that she sent it too low and it landed ignominiously in the net. She hesitated as to how to send her second ball. Should she risk another "fault" or send a "soft" ball which would certainly be returned "red hot." She decided on the bolder course and struck hard again. This time the ball went beautifully, cleared the net by an inch, struck near the back of the service court, and bounded scarce a foot from the ground. But Victor was there. Graceful as a Greek god, alert as an Indian, he watched the white globe as it came towards him, calculated where it was going to strike, with one bound put himself just in the right place. An easy swing of his racquet, and the ball soared back over the net, straight for the Harvard man, amid a murmur of applause.

The ball went high, but not high enough to go "out." "Take it," cried Vassar, and with a swing of his mighty arm Harvard "took" the ball with a vengeance. Away it soared through the tree-tops, and a small boy in the street ran after it. The referee proclaimed "Fifteen-all." There was a general laugh. Longworth colored deeply and began to explain to his partner.

"Why, I hardly touched it," he said. "I just gave it the least little tap and away it went."

His companion smiled good-naturedly, said "Never mind, I've often done the same thing myself," and went to her station on the other side of the court.

It was Lucy's turn to receive again, and she trembled for the result. "Do give me a soft one, that's a dear," she cried, and Vassar, changing her racquet from the "over" to the "under" hand position, sent her an easy ball. She got it and sent it back, just clearing the net. Harvard squatted down, stretched out his long arm and gently scooped the ball up; but alas! he was too gentle this time, though his companion's warning cry "not too hard" did not come till after he had struck. The ball hit the top of the net and bounced back. The unfortunate young man arose with a face like a boiled lobster, and muttered a wicked word. Distinct and remorseless came the voice of the referee "Fifteen-thirty."

Miss White pitied him, and said kindly as she passed, "Never mind, that ball struck the wood of your racquet, I could tell by the sound. If it hadn't been for that, it would have gone all right."

Standing well back among the spectators Mr. La-

ford was watching the game with a grave smile. A light touch on the shoulder caused him to turn. A tall, thin man with a tobacco-stained moustache said:

“I would like to speak with you just a minute, sir. Would you just step over to one of them chairs under the tree over there, I think we could talk without no danger of being overheard.”

They walked across the grass together. The millionaire seated himself and motioned his companion to a chair.

“Well, sir,” began the detective, “we’ve got the woodchuck in his hole at last. He’s in town again and living at a house in James Street. He’s going to quit this evening and we don’t know just where he’s going, but it will be easy to keep on his track. So what are your instructions?”

“Ah! I am glad to hear it. Well, as to my instructions—” Laford paused and seemed undecided. “To tell you the truth, I have had a great many other things to think of and I really haven’t made up my mind as to what I shall do. I think you had better just keep him shadowed until you hear from me again. It’s a difficult and delicate business, and I don’t want to make a false step.”

“All right, sir. We’ll just keep our eyes on him and see that he doesn’t do any harm and wait for further instructions. Good day, sir.”

The detective rose, bowed, and walked towards the gate. Laford went back to the tennis ground. But the pleasure of watching that gay young athlete in blue stockings was sadly marred. Another face would obtrude itself upon his attention. A face

not unlike in feature, but pale and fixed; and disfigured by a sullen scowl.

After a few minutes he turned to his daughter and said:

“I’m going home, Lily. Shall I send the carriage for you this evening or will you walk?”

“Oh! walk, of course.”

“Very well. Make my excuses to Miss Locus when she finishes her game.”

He left the ground and walked slowly homewards.

The game went on without him as if he had not been the second richest man in all New Manchester. The shouts of approval and disapproval, the applause and laughter grew fainter. Still, as he went on, that pale, fierce face was before him; and another face, pale also, but sweet and gentle, the hair parted and brushed down smoothly, in the style of the sixties, a face that he had loved once; that he wished he had never seen. Meanwhile, the young people continued their game.

The set ended in favor of the St. Josephs. Lucy, flushed with exertion and delight, took her place under the trees; and young Laford, having chosen the next pair of players, took his place by her side, stretching himself indolently on the sward. The long grass-stalks had been drawn by Violet and a slim, small, wiry youngster, home on furlough from West Point. To oppose them Sally Heriott selected herself and a very tall youth, a son of the Congregational minister. Miss Heriott herself was tall, so that length of reach was all on the side of the Dreadnoughts.

Nothing daunted, however, the little people took their stations for the fray. Vi served and sent a good ball. Sally sent it back neatly, just within bounds, on the left side of the cadet. His little white and blue legs twinkled nimbly towards it and he sent it back from over the left shoulder with a cut that did credit to the sabre drill of the great military nursery. But the stroke was a little too much downwards and the ball failed to clear the net. The Dreadnoughts shouted with delight, drowning the voice of the referee.

"Oh! You horrid, horrid, horrid boy," cried Violet, "how could you?"

The hapless West Pointer smiled mournfully but made no reply. He was a tyro at tennis and Vi was, for the time being, his superior officer. So he took the rebuke meekly and went to his post on the other side of the ground.

Violet served again; a good ball, not very swift, but well aimed. The long-armed champion of the Dreadnoughts reached for it and took it without leaving his post. Back it went, straight for the cadet. The gallant little soldier did nobly this time, but Miss Heriott's well-strung racquet intercepted the ball, and again it soared over the net. Vi ran for it and sent it back.

The tall youth happened, just then, to be standing in the attitude of Gulliver waiting for the Lilliputian Army to march under him. In this case the hosts of the empire of Lilliput were represented by the ball. Triumphant, it rolled between his blue and crimson legs, greatly to the amusement of the spectators.

"You did splendidly that time," said Vi graciously, as she and her partner changed sides.

"I'm afraid it was more chance than skill," replied the cadet modestly.

Vi served again ; and again Miss Sally met her creditably. When the ball came back both the St. Josephs made a rush at it. The cadet got it, and sent it over the net this time, but, being a little flustered by the sudden proximity of his lovely partner (whose head he just escaped hitting with his racquet) he sent the ball too much to one side and scored against himself.

"Oh ! dear ! Why didn't you let me take it ?" said Violet reproachfully.

"I ought to have," answered the little warrior, with a heart-broken expression on his freckled face. Wretched boy ! Vi was looking uncommonly well. Exercise agreed with her. The exquisite color in her cheeks was heightened, her silky ringlets were blown in charming confusion about her broad white forehead, her sweet mouth was just a little puckered, her deep blue eyes ready to grow moist ; she looked like a little girl who has just broken her own, dearest, sweetest, loveliest doll. The cadet knew in that moment that he adored her, that if he had as many lives as a cat he would give them all for her ; and she was vexed with him. Never before had he known what it was to suffer. He had cared for such small things before. Failures, and demerits, and getting up in time for roll-call, and that dreadful kick in the shin from the wicked artillery horse—ah ! they were nothing in comparison to this.

Again Vi struck, and this time, seeing that the long youth was standing rather far back, she tried to give him a "foxy" one and drop it just over the net. But it dropped just under the net instead. She sent a good ball next time, and it came back well aimed, for the minister's son was one of the best players among the Dreadnoughts; and chagrined at his previous failure, he was determined to make a good record. The cadet was near the net and tried to "volley" the ball, but missed and fell backwards. Vi was at the base line and took the ball on the bound and would have sent it back beautifully but for the luckless West Pointer. He was just rising when the ball took him between the shoulders. This time Vi was too indignant to say anything, but her silence was more dreadful than words. The referee proclaimed "fifteen-forty."

The next point was hard fought for. The ball went back and forth again and again. The spectators held their breath. At last, in her excitement, Violet struck too hard. The ball fell back of the enemies' base line and the referee pronounced the awful word "game."

The St. Josephs contested the remainder of the set gallantly but the red stockings were too strong for them, and the combat ended in a victory for the visiting club. Vi went and seated herself beside her dear Lily; and her unhappy partner hovered on the outskirts, longing, yet not daring to approach her. But, miserable outcast as he was, he could yet look at her from one side. He could admire the pose of her broad-brimmed straw hat; the grace of

her small figure; the well-rounded blue silk stocking, generously displayed by a skirt cut high in front; the impatiently tapping little foot. In a sort of agonized ecstasy he continued to gaze, like a lost soul beholding the abode of the blessed. The game had no further interest for him.

New representatives were chosen and the match went on. When, at last, the number of sets agreed on beforehand had been played, the St. Josephs were victorious. Twilight was coming on by that time and Miss Locus invited them to "Come into dinner just as you are." While the repast was being served in the great dining-room, and the shadows deepening outside, men were going around lighting the Chinese lanterns that hung about the house and grounds, so that when the guests reappeared, they beheld what newspaper men describe as "Fairyland."

Two negro lackeys rolled a piano through one of the large French windows to the piazza. A young lady, a poor relation of Miss Locus, seated herself at the piano; and, amid the curious mingling of the moonlight, gas light from the open windows, and candle light from the paper lanterns, the young people chatted and smoked and drank coffee until the signal for breaking up. Victor Laford and his sister walked home together, and Violet followed them with the little cadet, restored to favor and so happy that he could scarcely speak.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Are you yoing to the Schützenfest to-morrow?”

This question came from Miss Lizzie Simpson as she and Nomanson were walking home from the factory.

“What is the Schützenfest?”

“Why the Germans go and have a picnic. A lot of societies take part in it. They go to Maple Grove in a boat, and there they dance and shoot at a mark, and have a splendid time. Do you dance? No? That’s a pity. But I want you to go anyhow, and take me. The tickets are only twenty-five cents, and I’ll have a real nice little lunch for us both, and we’ll have a splendid time.”

She looked up at him pleadingly and he answered with a smile:

“All right. When shall we start?”

“Oh! we want to start early, with the first boat, at nine o’clock.”

“I’ll be ready.”

“You’re real good. Poor Tom!

“What’s the matter with Tom?”

“Why,” she answered, blushing a little and casting down her eyes, “Tom wanted me to go with him and tormented me, until, at last, to get rid of him, I said I’d promised to go with another gentleman. I wish he’d fall in love with some other girl.”

“I don’t doubt it would be better for the poor

fellow," said Nomanson; and he pleased his companion by showing again his strong white teeth.

The morning of the Schützenfest came in brightly. Nomanson arose in time for an eight o'clock breakfast and found Lizzie waiting arrayed for the picnic. Even he noticed how well she looked in her pale gray dress and black straw hat with gray and white feathers. Her quick eye perceived his approbation, and she smiled brightly as the morning itself.

"How do you think I look?" she said.

"Very nice."

"You won't be ashamed of being at the picnic with *me*, will you?"

"Far from it."

"I've been working awful hard to get this dress done in time, and I'm real glad you like it."

"I like it very much."

"And don't you like *me* just a little?"

"Why, yes. Of course."

He looked at her in astonishment, and spoke with some hesitation; he was accustomed to the ways and manners of girls of her class, but this did seem to be carrying the thing rather far. She saw his embarrassment and laughed, but she blushed at the same time.

"Don't be frightened," she said. "I don't mean any nonsense. I like you and want you to like me, but that's all."

They finished breakfast and started for the river. Lizzie carried a little basket on her arm; the top covered with a napkin. Nomanson offered to relieve her of it, but with considerable tact, she declined.

"I know gentlemen don't like to carry those things," she said, "and I'm going to give you a real pleasant day, so that you'll want to come with me again."

The excursionists went by barge, in tow of a tug to a grove a few miles up the river. In the centre of the ground was a pavilion roughly built, but gaily ornamented with flags and streamers. After a prelude, the band struck up a waltz. A few couples began to spin around the pine floor; and a number of grave men, fat women, and contemplative-looking babies watched them.

Lizzie and her escort settled themselves on a bench under a group of trees. They sat there quietly for a while, enjoying the shade, fresh air, and idleness.

Then Nomanson noticing some boats lying at the pier, proposed that they should take a row, and engaged a small skiff, and they went out on the river. The boat was well made and the rower was strong, so they glided rapidly through the water.

They went some distance up the river; landed and picked daisies and buttercups; went ashore on an island; threw stones into the water; sat under a tree; and finally started to return. As they were pushing off they saw the second boatload of excursionists going ashore. When they reached the wharf, the barge had started down the river again. On landing, they found that, although many of the first load of holiday-makers had gone out on the water in rowboats, the grove was still well filled. The proportion of Germans was not nearly so great as at

first. Lounging about were men carrying rifles, and wearing red ribbons and gilt badges inscribed with the motto "Liberty or death." Although the motto was in English most of the wearers were evidently foreigners. Here and there knots of men were gathered around, unusually excited talkers, who were speaking generally in some foreign tongue.

Nomanson and his companion seated themselves as far away from the crowd as possible. Near them was another bench, occupied by a man and three little girls. Presently another man came and sat down beside the children. He was small, thin and dark, and was smoking a big cigar.

At this stranger Nomanson gazed fixedly for over a minute. The other did not appear to notice the stare directed at him, but sat looking straight before him, slowly puffing at his cigar. After a while the young man turned to his companion and said :

"It's funny, but I've seen that man three times during the last week. It is very curious that I should meet him so often. If it was a girl, now, I might be flattered."

As he said the last words, the stranger rose and walked slowly away towards the music stand. He soon disappeared among the people. Presently two young men with rifles and badges came and seated themselves beside Lizzie. One was a dark youth with a slouched hat and long wavy hair. The other was taller, broad-faced and fair-skinned. His flaxen hair was cropped short, and his face marked from smallpox. He spoke earnestly for some time in German; gesticulating excitedly at intervals. No-

manson leaned forward and watched them and their weapons with intentness. Lizzie was not altogether pleased at finding something besides herself of so much importance, and presently rose, proposing a walk around the grove. Her words and action attracted the attention of the strangers, and the darker of the two, seeing Nomanson's eyes fixed on his rifle, handed it to him, saying with a smile that showed his small white teeth to advantage "Pretty tool, eh!"

Nomanson had risen to go, but he took the weapon and began to examine it.

"You never shoot?" inquired the owner, after a moment.

"No, never."

"You like it?"

"Don't know but what I would, if I had the right sort of thing to shoot at."

"Ah! you like shoot some bloated capitalist, eh!"

"Do come," said Lizzie, taking him by the arm. "Don't fool with those horrid guns. You never know when they'll go off, and they always do when you least expect it."

"I'll come in a minute," he answered, still examining the piece.

"Ain't no danger to the young lady," said the blond stranger, speaking without any foreign accent. "The gun ain't loaded. Neither is this one."

"But it might be and you not know it," protested Lizzie. "Come on."

Nomanson handed back the rifle, and went away with his companion.

Before they had gone far, Lizzie said:

“I hope you ain’t angry at me. I’m dreadful afraid of guns. A girl I knew was shot dead fooling with a pistol.”

Then Lizzie proposed dinner. They went to a little wooden table, and the girl produced the contents of her basket. It was not a feast fit for Lucullus, but it satisfied them. While eating a soda-cracker Nomanson turned his head suddenly and saw the little man with the black hair leaning against a tree about thirty yards away. He looked at him hard for a moment; but the man seemed not to notice the look. He was apparently watching a boat on the river.

They had finished their lunch and Lizzie was packing away the napkins in the basket, when a stout man with a thick brown beard, wearing the red ribbon and gilt badge of the rifle club, came up to Nomanson and said with a smile:

“Excuse me, my friend, but I hear you are interested in our rifle practice, and as we are just about to begin to shoot I thought you might like to join us. We are not a close corporation and if any stranger would like to shoot with us, and he is of the sort we like, we don’t refuse him a chance for the prizes.”

The man spoke carefully and correctly, but his accent showed that he was a foreigner.

Nomanson hesitated, more from astonishment at the proposal than from any disinclination to accept it. The man smiled more broadly and went on:

“You can bring your little lady along and we will see that she has a good seat, and perhaps she will see you win a prize.”

"I'm very much obliged to you, sir," said the young man. "I never fired off a rifle in my life." He looked toward Lizzie, inquiringly.

"Well," said the stranger, the smile suddenly leaving his face, "perhaps then it is well that you should learn. There are times coming, soon perhaps, when every man who does not desire to be a slave should know how to shoot."

A thrill passed over the young man's frame and a fierce light kindled in his eyes. He was astonished at himself for allowing the girl at his side to stand for a moment between him and such an offer as had just been made.

"You are very kind," he answered. "I'll be glad to make a beginning now. Perhaps some day I shall know enough to make it dangerous for any man to try to make a slave of *me*."

"Well said, my brother," said the stranger, holding out his broad hand. "I have known you less than five minutes, but I see the stuff that is in you, and that you are worthy to be a co-worker in the noble cause of freedom."

Nomanson grasped the offered hand. Then he turned to Lizzie and said kindly, but in a tone that showed that he did not intend to be turned from his purpose :

"Come on and see the fun. There's no danger. You never saw a rifle match, did you?"

She raised her eyes to his and pouted a little.

"I'm afraid of guns," she said.

The stout man regarded her sternly. Then he said: "Some day, perhaps, you will be glad to see this

young man with a rifle in his hand, stand between you and tyranny. Young woman, you fear the wrong thing. You are an American, and a daughter of Liberty. Steel your heart then, for soft-hearted women are fit only to be the mothers of slaves."

"I don't exactly understand, sir," answered the girl, sullenly. "Go by all means, Mr. Nomanson, if you want to. I'll wait here for you. When you're through, I hope you'll be good enough to come back and escort me home."

"Very well. I will be back presently," he said indifferently, and turning to the stranger, went with him.

The rifle range was in an adjoining field. When they reached it a number of people were already gathered. Several men with rifles stood ready to begin shooting. Among them were the two young men who had made already the acquaintance of the new recruit. They stepped forward and held out their hands to him. Others did the same. No one asked his name nor did he know the names of any of his new friends. The dark young man took upon himself the special task of instructing him in the use of a rifle.

Before long the shooting began. A large number of women and children were seated on rough benches conveniently placed for watching the practice, and a still larger number of men stood behind and beside them. The moderately good shots were vociferously applauded, and the bad ones passed over in good-humored silence. None of the marksmen distinguished themselves by any really brilliant work.

At last Nomanson was invited to take his turn. With a curious feeling of power and exultation he stepped forward. Strong, keen-eyed, and steady-nerved, he needed no long apprenticeship to become a good marksman, and the first shot that he fired was better than half of those which had preceded it.

"Well done, my lad," said the stout man, slapping him on the shoulder. "A little practice would make you a formidable champion of the good cause."

"He must be one of us," said a clear, unmistakably feminine voice from behind.

He turned and saw standing close to him two women. One of them was very pale with dark eyes and coal black hair, a straight nose, and a thin-lipped mouth. Her companion was younger, scarcely beyond her girlhood. Her hair was chestnut color, her eyes large and gray, her face rather pale, her nose straight, her lips full and deep colored, her forehead broad and low. A glance at her convinced the young man that she was the speaker.

"Yes," said the older woman, as though continuing the conversation, "he must be one of us."

"My brother," said the younger woman, "holding out a white and well formed hand, "you are welcome."

Nomanson took the offered hand and gazed steadily into the gray eyes raised to his. Then in the same way he received the greeting of the older woman.

"We are few in number," she said, as she held out her hand, long and slender, but strong as a leopard's paw; "but we are devoted, and we are brave, and

we have the power that science gives us. We count our lives as nothing in the good cause ; and if it be possible, we count the lives of tyrants as still less. Are you with us ? ”

“ I am with you.”

“ Then I too, say, welcome my brother.”

“ My friend,” said the stout man, “ these are our two most precious jewels. But you must know more about us now. This young lady is Vera Nicholaef. This one is Élise Larose. This,” pointing to the dark young rifleman, “ is Giulio Ardetti ; and this one ” indicating the fair-haired young man who had been his companion in welcoming Noman-son, “ is Franz Stamm. I am Josef Rothmann.” He glanced around, and seeing that there were no more bystanders to be introduced, he went on, “ now you know our names : tell us yours.”

“ John Nomanson.”

“ Vera is secretary of our club. Give her your address, and you will be kept informed of all that it is to your interest to know.”

Nomanson complied, and the secretary made a note of his street and number. When this had been done the young man concluded that he had been away from his companion long enough, and determined to return to her at once.

“ I am glad to have met you, ladies and gentlemen,” he said, “ and our acquaintance shall not end here. But I must return to my friend, now. I have left her alone, perhaps, too long already. Good-bye, till we meet again.”

He took off his hat and bowed to the group. They

returned his salutation gravely, and he took his departure.

He did not blame himself at all for having left Lizzie by herself for a short time. He considered it entirely her own folly ; and he believed that she was safe from any annoyance: the “rough” element being absent from the picnic. When he reached the bench where he had left her, he found that she was not there.

Lizzie had been decidedly vexed with her escort. In fact, she had been more than vexed, and her anger did not cool after he left her. She was a clever girl and understood his character well enough to know that she would gain nothing by sulkiness or scolding ; but still her anger became so unreasonable that although knowing that she would hurt herself far more than him, she determined to retaliate by going home alone and at once.

It so happened, however, that the boat had gone down the river, and it would be an hour before it returned. But she could, at any rate, avoid her recreant cavalier ; so she went to the outskirts of the grove and sat down with her back against a large tree. The fields beyond were radiant in the light of an August sun. But she was not admiring the prospect. Her mind was too full of other thoughts. She would *never* speak to him again. No. But would he care ? No, of course he wouldn’t. Never mind, she would make him care. She would make him care for *her*. Then she would be revenged. But to do that she must appear to forgive him for the present. No ; that she could never endure. The

only way was to break with him finally and forever —to forget him. That was an eminently satisfactory conclusion, that didn't satisfy.

In the midst of her reverie, just as she was angrily wiping away a crystal drop that would force itself out the corner of her eye in spite of her, a familiar voice addressed her :

“How are you, Liz.”

“Hello, Tom! is that you. What in the world brought you here?”

“Oh! I felt like coming.”

“How did you know I was here?”

“Seen you.”

“Well, I'm glad to see you anyhow. Let's walk around.”

They walked towards the centre of the grove. The German band was in full blast, and, as they drew near, Lizzie had to raise her voice in addressing her companion.

“I'm ever so glad you come, Tom. I didn't have the faintest idea you'd be here.”

“Where's the fellow that came with you?”

“Had a quarrel;” she colored as she spoke.

Her companion grinned.

“What did he do?”

“Oh! It's of no consequence. It isn't worth talking about. He's just a regular bear, that's all. Let's go and sit down and listen to the music.”

She had not looked directly at him, but she had seen Nomanson standing on the edge of the crowd. He saw them and came towards them.

“Ah! there you are,” he said; “I was wondering

what had become of you. Glad to see you Mr. Hartley."

"Same to you."

"I don't think I need trouble you to escort me home, Mr. Nomanson," said Lizzie, icily. "Mr. Hartley will take care of me for the rest of the day. Let's go and sit over there, Tom."

Nomanson could not mistake her manner and he turned away with a smile that made the young lady rage inwardly. In his opinion a girl's preferences were matters of utterly unreasonable caprice, and he did not care in the least about this sudden loss of favor. He walked serenely across the grove and back to the rifle range.

When he had worked his way through the crowd sufficiently near to see what was going on at the range, he perceived Vera Nicholaef in the attitude of taking aim at the target, while Mlle. Larose stood near her, rifle in hand.

The girl took a quick but steady aim, and the smoke spirited from her piece. A burst of applause announced a good shot.

The Frenchwoman then took her place, and a louder and more prolonged round of hand clapping and shouting announced a still better result. She fired three times, making three good points; and then retired, to make way for Rothmann, who failed to distinguish himself. His last shot finished the match. After a short pause, a man came forward and took his station between the parallel lines of spectators.

He was rather above medium height, and some-

what spare and slim. His face was pale ; and clean-shaven, except for a flaxen moustache. His nose was not aquiline, but the bridge was high. His eyes were steel-gray, and singularly bright and piercing. His hand as he raised it to signal silence was white and slender. There was a general high-bred look about him.

He began to speak in English, but Nomanson could not make out what he was saying, at first, on account of the movement and whispering of the people around him. Presently, however, he distinguished the words, and found that the speaker was about to distribute prizes to the successful marksmen. His words were well-chosen, and there was nothing remarkable in the sentiments expressed until he came to the closing sentences of his address :

“ The persons named will now step forward to receive their prizes ; and it may be my lot or the lot of some other friend of this land, at some future day, to give, not only to them, but to each and all, the one great prize ; won, if necessary, with powder and lead ; the one great prize of prizes, Liberty.”

Élise Larose and two men stepped forward and three gold pins were fastened to their breasts by the orator. While decorating the men he said nothing, but when it came to the woman’s turn, he first put on the prize, and then addressed the people :

“ Women of America let this be your example. This woman, then scarcely more than a child, fought by my side in the streets of Paris, against the minions of Thiers and MacMahon. Heroically she risked her life,—do you prepare to risk what is dearer to you

than life, the lives of your husbands and sons. Show yourselves great as those Spartan mothers who gave their sons a shield and that glorious command, destined to ring trumpet-toned through all the ages ‘With it, or on it.’”

The assembly then broke up. Before Nomanson had gone far he felt a hand on his shoulder, and he turned to see the dark face and brilliant eyes of Giulio Ardetti.

“So my friend, we meet again,” said the young Italian, smiling.

“I am glad to see you,” said Nomanson, smiling in return.

“Let us go and drink the health of the good cause,” continued Ardetti.

“A good idea. A day as hot as this makes one thirsty, but I don’t think our drinking its health will do the cause much good.”

The two newly made friends walked to a tent, around which were scattered irregularly rough board tables. Two boards, supported on barrels in front of the tent formed a “bar,” behind which a fat and bald-headed German was dispensing liquid refreshment.

“Will you have wine or beer?” inquired Ardetti.

“A bottle of plain soda will suit me,” answered his companion.

“Are you a teetotaler?”

“Yes.”

“Excuse me for saying so, but that is a bad habit.”

“Not as bad as drinking, I think.”

“Ah! you Americans are prejudiced against the

generous blood of the grape. It is life and strength and vigor. It cheers but inebriates not. Let me persuade you to make one experiment and see if I do not tell the truth."

"I have a strong objection to trying any experiments of that kind."

"Well, then, since I cannot bring you down to my level I must rise to yours. Plain soda will suit me too."

He procured the bottles and glasses and carried them to one of the tables. They were disposing of the contents of the bottles when the man who had distributed the markmen's prizes passed them, talking to Rothmann.

"Who is that man with Mr. Rothmann?" inquired Nomanson.

"His name is Pulaski. We generally call him "the Count." He is a Polish nobleman by birth, but he is a Socialist by profession. He is president of the club; Rothmann is vice-president."

The young Italian spoke with a slight foreign accent but his command of language seemed so perfect that his companion could not refrain from inquiring:

"How long have you been in America?"

"About five years."

"Then I suppose you are a citizen."

"No. I do not care to be. It is not by the ballot but by the bullet that freedom comes."

"Were you a Socialist in Italy?"

"Yes, though I was very young when I was there. My father and two brothers were killed fighting with

Garibaldi. My grandfather brought my mother and me to America. They are both dead now."

"Were you old enough to do any fighting?"

"No. But I remember my mother crying and my father and brothers going away, and they said they had gone to join Garibaldi. My younger brother was only fifteen, but they say he fought bravely."

Nomanson was looking thoughtfully at the ground.

"I would like to see some shooting in earnest."

The Italian turned towards him, and his face flushed and his eyes gleamed.

"You will, before long," he said.

"Let it come."

"It will come. The tyrants have pressed their iron heels too deep in the people's neck. There is vengeance in the air—vengeance."

He rose to his feet as he spoke and raised one arm in the air.

Ardetti's words and gestures seemed to attract the attention of "the Count" and his companion. They turned towards the two young men and after a few words the Pole came up to them, while Rothmann went to the tent. The president of the rifle club, after the usual fraternal greeting to the neophyte, entered into conversation upon the weather, the rifle match and other commonplace topics until his friend returned with more glasses and half a dozen bottles of lager.

The Italian joined the others in their refreshments, but Nomanson steadily abstained. With true European politeness they refrained from urging him.

Before long the talk drifted into Socialism, and

Ardetti and Rothmann grew more and more excited. The "Count" continued calm in manner but the others gesticulated wildly and spoke so loud that curious listeners gathered around. So the afternoon wore on until the rays of the declining sun began to enter the grove from the west, and shone full on the face of Rothmann, as, leaning across the table, with one fist raised in the air he demanded the overthrow of capital and the elevation of the masses.

At last, however, the orator discovered that it was time to return to town. He was chief editor of the *Firebrand*, and had work to do in connection with it. The others decided to accompany him and warned by the whistle of the tugboat, hastened down to the shore; but this movement put no check upon the flow of Socialistic talk.

On reaching the city they parted, with a promise from Nomanson to attend a meeting of the rifle club, of which he would be notified in time.

Nomanson's "familiar" with black hair was following him.

About ten o'clock Lizzie and Tom Hartley returned from the picnic. She was in hilarious spirits, and her "gent" was beaming with quiet happiness.

In taking leave of her escort Lizzie even returned the affectionate pressure of his hand.

"If you only had spirit enough I'd get you to *kill* that fellow Nomanson."

"Maybe I have got enough."

"Pshaw! You're a good fellow, but you haven't got any spirit."

"Maybe I have," he answered, as he walked away

with his hands in his pockets, and whistling. When he had gone about three blocks he uttered a remark so sensible that it was a pity that only the air was there to hear it.

“I’ll be d——d if I’ll get a black eye for her or any other girl.”

CHAPTER IX.

MISS VIOLET EVERSLY was on the piazza, attired for driving, and was drawing on her drab gloves. Small as her hands were, she wore her gloves too small, and it was no easy task getting them on. This may have been the cause of her frowning and pouting, but more probably it was the fact that "Victor had gone riding again with that Locus girl."

But Violet intended to bring him to terms. Not that she would acknowledge to herself even, that she cared for him except in a sisterly way, or that he could presume so far as to imagine anything of the sort. Still she had a notion that after he had seen her riding with Mr. Frank Briarly, the richest bachelor in New Manchester, he would be rather less attentive to Miss Locus.

She smiled when the sound of wheels announced the arrival of her escort. She smiled still more brightly when he reined in his high-strung team at the foot of the steps and his groom sprang from behind to take the horses' heads. More slowly, Mr. Briarly descended. He was forty-five, stout, red-faced and red-whiskered. He was not a noted whip, and he had made a bad job of getting his wagon up to the steps. This, however, the groom remedied by leading the horses forward a little, and the young lady climbed nimbly into the lofty T-cart. Briarly ascended also, calling, "let 'em go." The horses

went off with a plunge, and the groom swung himself up into his seat like a monkey, or a street urchin, which he had been a few years before.

Frank Briarly owned three immense factories in different parts of the country, and was said to be worth from four to eight millions. He resided, when in New Manchester, at the Central Hotel, where his apartments occupied an entire floor. The fact that he had spent much more of his time than usual at New Manchester during the past year, and that his friendship for Mr. Laford seemed more intimate, had attracted notice.

Generally he was talkative and loud-mouthed, but with ladies he was apt to be shy, until he knew them well. Violet he had tried to know well for a year, but she had hitherto kept him at a distance. Now, he was too much occupied with his horses to say much. But Vi said enough for both, and the lean-faced lackey behind smiled grimly at some of her remarks that were lost on his preoccupied master.

They went down the avenue at a three-minute pace, and swung into the road in a way that threatened disaster. Violet seized the rail of the seat nervously, but bravely repressed a scream. On the street it was plain sailing, and, after a three-mile spin, the bays had relieved themselves sufficiently of their superfluous spirits to allow their master to light a cigar.

Frank Briarly smoked high-priced cigars, but, as a clerk of his had once remarked, after being favored with one from his employer's case, "Goliath is nowhere compared with the strength of 'em." The

smoke made Violet's eyes water, and brought out several hard-fought little coughs; but she stood it bravely.

Her companion was well satisfied. The horses were now under easy control, the cigar was soothing his nerves, and he seemed to be making an impression on the disdainful little "belle" whom he had wooed for a year in vain. His satisfaction was heightened when she drew close to his side (the cigar smoke mercifully going over his right shoulder just then) and, looking up, inquired in an anxious tone whether he was really going away to Chicago in two days.

He was about to answer her, without troubling himself to remove his cigar, when from a cloud of dust in front emerged the foaming mouth and flying limbs of a "speeded" trotter, in the shafts of a light vehicle, containing Victor Laford and Lucy Locus.

There was only time for a glance of recognition as they shot past and were gone. But in that glance Victor had seen all that Violet had wanted him to see, and she felt a thrill of delight at her success.

She was gayer than usual after that, and when Mr. Briarly requested her to take the reins while he lighted a fresh cigar, she complied with the utmost good nature. Perhaps, if she had known what was then passing in Victor's mind, she would have found it harder to wear the mask.

It is a good thing, sometimes, for a woman to be cold to the man she loves. A man often undervalues a thing until he loses it; and a realizing sense of what the loss of her affection would be to him, some-

times is needed to show him how much he cares for her. It may be well sometimes to make him jealous, though that policy has its risks ; it may bring him to terms, but he is apt to be susceptible to suspicion for many a year afterwards. But, never, under any circumstances, is it advisable to disgust him.

Victor Laford was disgusted. He despised Frank Briarly with all his aristocratic soul. The Lafords had been rich for three generations. Briarly had risen from nothing. Hence, according to Victor's logic, a Laford was three times as good as Briarly. But worse than that, Briarly was not a gentleman. His personal appearance could be forgiven, for even the blue blood of Europe has no power to save its scions from big feet and red hands ; but his manners, his grammar, his voice, and his laugh ; these could not be forgiven ; they all marked him as an upstart.

He considered that she had shown bad taste in the first place in going to drive with Briarly. Once in the wagon she could not well have prevented him from smoking ; but she ought to have known that he would make an exhibition of himself and her in some way. To sit close to him, and talk to him, and smile at him, under the circumstances ;—that was disgusting.

“ That was Vi and Mr. Briarly, wasn’t it ? ” inquired Miss Locus, breaking in upon his reverie. “ She seems to like him quite well, doesn’t she ? I never thought she did before.”

Victor’s face flushed. “ Even *she* has noticed it, ” said he to himself.

“ Yes, I think she does. It would be a good thing

if she should marry him. He's worth six millions, they say, and I think they'd just suit each other."

He threw a scornful emphasis into the last words, that did not escape his not very observant companion.

"Why Victor! You're angry at her."

"Angry? I'd as soon be angry at a kitten."

"I like Vi, and I'd like to see her make a good match but I don't think that Mr. Briarly is suited to her."

"Well, I suppose she knows what she wants and I'm sure I hope she'll get it. I suppose you've heard that Mrs. Schultze is going to give a big ball next week. Are you going?"

"I don't know. Are you?"

"I think not. I went last year and there was a tremendous crush. Hot as fury too, most likely. If the Dutch woman had any sense she wouldn't give such an affair in summer."

"That's very true. I don't feel inclined to go." Then Miss Locus was foolish enough to return to a subject which her companion evidently wished to have left alone. She was kind-hearted, but that was not her true reason for so doing. She looked on Violet as a rival, and she wished to show her magnanimity.

"I can't help thinking that you are angry with poor little Vi," she said. "She is very young, and I think a great deal of allowance ought to be made for her."

"My dear Miss Locus," said Laford, his voice indicating a sort of pitying weariness, "I cannot see what Vi has done to make me angry with her. She

seems to me to be doing admirably, and I think she deserves to be commended for the very sensible choice she has made. Pray believe me when I assure you for the second time that I am *not* angry with Vi."

Lucy colored and said nothing more for the remainder of the ride, which lasted only a few minutes.

After young Laford had deposited the heiress at her own door he drove slowly down the avenue with slackened reins. This signified to the "Flier" that he was to go slow, but he had not had enough exercise for the morning, and was inclined to disregard the hint. He was an astute animal, and thought to test his master's frame of mind by gradually increasing his pace. Finding that this was allowed to pass, he grew bolder, and Laford suddenly woke to the fact that he was approaching the gate at a tremendous pace, and in danger of colliding with a wagon driven by an upright, military looking gentleman, with gray moustache and side whiskers.

A stern pull and "saw" convinced the trotter that his own way was not his master's way, but a taste of liberty had given him a desire for more and, laying back his ears, he dashed on. Fortunately the elderly gentleman got his vehicle out of the way, and the wheels escaped by an inch or two.

Young Laford swung around through the gate in safety, and the gray-whiskered gentleman proceeded towards the house in a leisurely manner, smiling under his long moustache.

"Got the mitten, by Jove," he said, and his smile

broadened. " Didn't think the girl had so much sense, by Jove."

He drew rein in front of the mansion and went in. Miss Locus kept him waiting half an hour while she changed her dress and then came down in an apologetic flutter.

" Do excuse me, Colonel," she said, holding out her hand. " I had been out driving and—"

" My dear young lady, no apologies, pray," interrupted the gallant gentleman, bending over the jeweled hand. " I assure you that I have enjoyed myself immensely admiring these beautiful works of art, and this charmingly tasteful—ah---combination of—ah—furniture and—ah—carpet and—and—so forth."

" You're very good, Colonel ; pray be seated."

" I met young Victor Laford going out of the gate," said the elderly warrior, as he seated himself opposite his hostess. " He was driving as if the—ah—something was after him, and, by Jove, he nearly took my wheel off."

A tell-tale blush had risen to the young lady's face at the mention of Laford's name ; which changed to pallor as she heard of his danger.

" Dear me !" she exclaimed, " how can he be so reckless, after all I have said to him, too."

The Colonel's eyes opened a little.

" By Jove !" he said. " It's exceedingly good of you to take so much interest in him. If I was in his place I should think myself confoundedly well off."

" Oh ! Colonel !" giggled Miss Locus, the blush suffusing her face again.

“ True as Gospel, my dear young lady, I assure you upon my honor. The thought that you ever gave me a thought—would—ah—make me—ah—doocedly happy.”

“ Colonel, you’re dreadful,” exclaimed Lucy, hiding her face behind her fan. “ Really, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!”

“ Too jocular, by Jove ! ” said the Colonel to himself. “ Maybe only nervousness, but still, won’t do to risk anything. Too much at stake for that.” So he laughed in his brisk good-humored style, and said, aloud : “ Ashamed of admiring you, my dear ; why, I have admired you ever since you were that high.”

“ That was a long while ago.”

“ Long ago ! Not at all. Let me see. Why bless my soul, how time does fly. You must be nearly twenty.”

The young lady smiled. The Colonel’s memory for dates was evidently bad, but it was a curious fact that he always *underestimated* the ages of his friends of the gentler sex: provided they were not *too* young; then he overestimated. The Colonel was very popular.

After an hour of genial conversation the visitor took his departure. Miss Locus and her aunt stood at one of the long windows watching him sitting erect as a dart, with his tall hat a little on one side.

“ Delightful gentleman,” remarked Mrs. Smith.

“ I like Colonel Sancroft very much,” answered Miss Locus. “ Only he’s a little too young for his age.”

"Pshaw, he's not a day over fifty. That there gray hair don't show nothing."

"Well," remarked the young lady decidedly, "if he thinks I'll marry him, he's mistaken."

About the same time Victor Laford, returning from a spin down the road in which he had indulged his horse's ambition to that animal's full satisfaction, drew up at the door of his father's house. His mother met him on the piazza.

"Don't you think you have overdriven your horse a little, Victor?" enquired the lady gently.

"No, not at all. And now, mother, will you please tell me whether it is with your consent that Vi is driving around the country with Frank Briarly?"

Mrs. Laford's face became very grave.

"Certainly; you do not suppose that Violet would go driving with Mr. Briarly against my wishes."

"I suppose not, but really, my dear mother, you must pardon me for saying that I don't think Briarly is the right sort of a fellow for Vi to go out with."

A look of annoyance crossed the lady's face.

"Why?" she asked.

"He's a low, vulgar fellow and—it seems to me that's enough."

"My dear boy, that is very strong language."

"Not a bit too strong, though."

For a moment Victor was tempted to tell everything; but he was too loyal to "give away" his cousin even to this very gentle monitress, so he contented himself with saying:

"He was riding with Vi this afternoon and puffing

a cigar at the same time, which seems to *me* in very bad taste."

"I think it was," admitted Mrs. Laford.

"But, pshaw! Where's the use of talking?" said the young man impatiently, and, turning on his heel, he went into the house.

His mother looked after him with a smile. She was not at all displeased to see him so much annoyed at what he had seen.

CHAPTER X.

THE morning after the Schützenfest, Nomanson met Lizzie in the hall.

“I believe you were a little put out yesterday,” he said.

She burst into a high-pitched trill of laughter.

“Well, really,” she said, “if men ain’t the funniest creatures on the face of this earth! The idea of your thinking I was mad at you. Of course I’m not, and I’ll be delighted to see you this evening.”

“Horrid wretch!” to herself, as she followed him down the next flight, “I’ll be revenged on you yet.”

About a week later Nomanson received a letter addressed in a large, angular hand. He was not mistaken in supposing it to be a communication from Miss Nicholaef.

“Workingman’s Rifle-club. Meeting August 17th, at 8:00 P. M., 171 Yonge Street.

“What will you have, brother? My rights!

“VERA NICHOLAEF, Sect

“Destroy this letter.”

He did not exactly understand the last part of the missive, but the first part was clear enough, and after supper he started out to find Yonge Street.

It was a dingy street, unpaved and bordered by low, two-story brick houses. One of them bore the figures 171 in white paint on the door. As no ray of

light appeared inside the house he doubted whether it was the right one, but rang the bell.

The door was opened two inches, and a voice from the darkness within inquired, "What will you have, brother?"

A sudden light flashed into Nomanson's mind and he answered, "My rights."

He was allowed to enter, and he was in darkness. A moment more and the scene was illumined by the light from a dark lantern. He saw a narrow hall and staircase, and recognized in the doorkeeper one of the riflemen of the Schützenfest.

"Go up," said he, with a foreign accent; "you'll find ze door open."

He did so, and entered a large room, lighted only by the summer twilight coming through the windows, front and rear. He could see that there were men in the room, and hear conversation. Presently two lamps were brought and placed on the chairman's desk. He then recognized the chairman as the Pole —Pulaski. Behind the desk the American flag and a red flag were crossed. He just had time to notice this when the chairman called the meeting to order. The first business was the initiation of the new member. He was made to take an oath of allegiance to the Society and was then given the fraternal hand clasp. After that the club proceeded to discuss the matter of establishing a rifle range and purchasing rifles. There was much debating, but no definite action taken. Several letters were read,—one from a Chicago anarchist ridiculing the rifle as a means of carrying terror to the souls of tyrants, and advising

the club to send their rifles to the museum as fit company of javelins and arrows ; and to reform themselves into a dynamite society. Then they could strike blows for freedom which would make the monopolists tremble on their thrones.

This letter was received with considerable laughter, and the meeting broke up.

In spite of the open windows the room was insufferably hot, and Nomanson was glad to get out into the air, hot as it was outside. The members of the club dispersed quickly and silently.

He was walking slowly along Broad Avenue, when he heard footsteps behind him. Two women who were walking quickly, soon overtook him. As they did so, they separated and came up, one on either side. He expected them to pass, but instead of doing so, they kept beside him for a few steps. Then he looked more closely and recognized them as the two "rifle women," whom he had met at the Schützenfest.

They said nothing, and he found the situation becoming awkward. Any conventional greeting seemed out of place, and yet he felt as if he must say something. Presently a bright thought occurred to him :

"What will you have my sisters?"

"Our rights," they answered, smiling.

"I suppose you mean women's rights?"

The French woman answered "yes."

The Russian hesitated, and then said : "The rights of man and woman are the same."

"And what are they?"

"If you wish me to teach you, come with me."

“ To-night ? ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ It is—” He tried hard to think of a word which would be delicate and at the same time express his meaning : but it was unnecessary, for she understood him.

“ Bah ! ” she said contemptuously. “ Who cares what they think ? But if you still believe in stupid and degrading customs, as if they were revelations from God, I shall not find you a very good pupil.”

She spoke with an accent, but fluently, and her words were clearly pronounced.

“ Very well. I will come.”

“ Elise will help me to instruct you. *N'est ce pas, ma chere ? —allons !* ”

She took Nomanson’s arm, and as they turned into a street to the left, she asked :

“ Why did you join the rifle-club ? ”

“ Because I wanted to learn how to shoot.”

“ You had another object.”

“ How do you know ? ”

“ How ! Why in the same way you know that I am talking to you. Am I a psychology-professor, who can analyze the knowing process ? I saw you shoot at the picnic, and I knew that you wished that every bullet went to the heart of a capitalist. Is it not so ? ”

“ Yes. I would have liked to see every one of them go into the heart of one particular capitalist—or no, not that either.—That would be too good for him.”

“ Ah ! You have a special grievance then ? Let me know it.”

“It would do you no good.”

“Some secret injury? Aha! I can guess then. There is some girl in the case. A sweetheart, or a sister? I am right?”

Her eyes and teeth glistened in the moonlight, as she looked at him with a maliciously sympathetic smile. He felt the color rise to his cheek.

“Believe what you please.”

“Ho! You are very reticent. You have been cut to the quick, and the wound has not yet healed. I sympathize with you, my brother. But we will yet make things hot for the aristocrat who stole your loved one. Eh! Élise?”

“The day of vengeance will come,” said the French woman, “and in that day shall be revenged the wrongs of a hundred years. That day shall be a day of fire and blood, and the red flag shall float.”

“When is that day coming?” inquired Nomanson.

The French woman lowered her voice and said:

“Sooner than you think.”

“When do you want it to come?” asked Vera.

Nomanson knitted his brows and answered sullenly:

“To-morrow.”

“Good. You shall be one of us, my brother.”

“What does that mean?”

“You shall see.”

When they reached a small house in a row of others like it, Vera withdrew her hand from Nomanson’s arm and entered with a latch key, the others following.

As his eyes became accustomed to the darkness within, he made out a dark figure ascending the stairs.

For a moment his thoughts were not altogether agreeable. "Suppose they should cut my throat? They're a queer pair, and foreigners besides, and who knows what they'll be up to next? Pshaw! What a fool I am. What motive could they have for murdering a poor devil like me?"

He dismissed his fear and waited until Vera called: "Can you find your way to the stair?"

As she spoke she lighted a match and he went up.

"When the time comes," she said, "we will turn on the light in all its brilliance, but until then inquisitive outsiders should know as little as possible about our affairs. Give me your hand."

Hers was small, soft and warm; but steady and resolute in its grip. She led him into a large front room. The moonlight sufficed to show that it contained only a table and some chairs.

Vera opened a window.

"The other will be here before long," she said.

"What other?" inquired Nomanson.

"You will see."

CHAPTER XI.

THE French woman said something in a low tone. The Russian made no answer but approached the window where Nomanson sat. She seated herself opposite to him and said, "Look,—not now,—but presently, and tell me what you see across the street."

Nomanson obeyed, and, after a careful survey, said, "Nothing remarkable. All that I see are some houses, and a man standing in the shadow of them."

"What is the man doing, eh?"

"Nothing that I can see, except standing with his hands in his pockets and smoking a cigar."

"Bah! You are blind as a bat. I shall have to tell you. That man is watching *you*."

"Me!" in a tone of genuine surprise.

"He, and others like him, have been shadowing you for three days, to my knowledge, and for how much longer nobody knows—except those in the plot against you. But two things we know for certain, you are watched, and the man who set the blood-hounds on your track is John Laford. It is well to have friends—when you have enemies," she said.

"Yes." He was too much astonished to think of anything else to say.

"And you know now who your friends are."

"I have known all along. But I see that you are more powerful than I supposed. They might have

dogged me till doomsday and I should never have noticed it. How did you come to find it out?"

"By using our eyes, that is all. If you will tell it all, perhaps we can be of great service to you. We are all brothers and we stand by each other in everything."

"No. What is between me and John Laford is something that I will never tell."

"Listen to me, and you may change your resolution. Do you know that you are now in a court-room?"

"Since you tell me so, it must be true."

He inspected the dusky room as he spoke.

"Good. You are now in the place where the Court of the Outer Circle for New Manchester holds its sessions. It will assemble to-morrow at midnight. Come and state your grievance, and, if your cause is just, sentence will be passed and *executed*."

"How?"

"I can answer that best by telling you what happened two years ago. A man named Jamison, of wealth and high social position, but with the temper of a fiend, pretended to own some of the land which God has given to the whole people, and some of his employees lived in houses which he had built on this land. There was a strike, and they were unable to pay rent. It was midwinter, but he evicted them,—men, women and children. Two women and three children died of cold and starvation. More would have died, but people as poor as themselves took them in. It is an old story. A man has a legal right to kill people in that way. But the Court of

the Outer Circle does not recognize any such right. It is a court of Justice, not of Law. The man who committed the crime was accused, tried, convicted, and executed."

"How was he executed?"

"If you had read the New Manchester papers then you would have learned of the disappearance of Mr. Jamison, and the finding of his body in the river. At the coroner's inquest it was proved that he was drunk when he started for home. Two friends and a barkeeper swore to that. The jury's verdict was accidental drowning. The Court had issued a decree that he should die in three days—and he was dead within three days. It may have been a coincidence. * * * *

When her comrade had finished this recital, the French woman raised her clenched fist in the air and said: "The arm of the people's vengeance is strong."

"And now, my brother," continued the Russian, "what do you say? Will you appear to-morrow before the Court of the Outer Circle?"

Nomanson looked her straight in the eye and answered slowly: "I will have nothing to do with assassination. If the Outer Circle wants fighting done, count me in—if it wants murder, count me out."

The Russian smiled. "Pah! You don't know what you are talking about. You will wage war, will you, but you won't murder? Where is the difference? Fair fighting! Bah! There is no such thing as fairness in fighting. Ask my friend Élise. She has seen war. A masked battery, an ambuscade, a night attack; is that fair fighting? Yet that is war,

What do you think of the American hero Washington? Was he a good man, eh?"

"Yes, one of the best men that ever lived."

"Ah! And was it *fair* in him to cross the Delaware in the night and massacre a gang of drunken Hessians in their beds? Eh, my friend?"

"I can't argue with you. You are much smarter than I am and can out-talk me. But there *is* a difference between fighting and murdering, and I am no murderer."

The French woman stepped forward and faced him.

"So," she said, "you scorn the justice of the Outer Circle?" There was a suggestion of a menace in the tone of her question.

"Come, Élise, no heroics," said Vera, laying her hand on the arm of the excited woman. "Leave him to his prejudices. He is safe. He will betray nothing. And he is truly in sympathy with our great purpose."

Élise turned and spoke excitedly in French, the Russian replying in the same tongue. Nomanson, although ignorant of French, knew that he was the subject of the conversation. At last, the French woman said to him abruptly; "you are a fool, but I suppose God made you so and you can't be blamed for it," and left the room. The others followed and at the street-door they separated, going in different directions. Nomanson had walked nearly a mile before he thought of the man pointed out to him by Vera. Looking about, he recognized him walking in the shadow of the opposite houses. He was half

inclined to speak, but concluded to wait, and think the matter over, before deciding what to do. As he was entering his lodgings he saw the detective keeping in the shadow at a street corner some hundred feet away.

CHAPTER XII.

The afternoon sun, streaming into an upper window of the Laford mansion, fell full on the tall figure of the daughter, as she studied her own reflection in a long mirror. She was not much given to this, and Violet, who was seated on an ottoman near her, was curious to learn the reason. Both were in riding habits, and the latter held a mother-of-pearl handled whip clasped in both hands against one knee. After restraining her curiosity as long as she could, she said, "What is it, dear? A pimple? I've got some black court plaster."

"Violet," said Miss Laford, not noticing the question, "Do you remember that insolent young fellow who frightened us so about two months ago?"

Miss Eversley made a face.

"Remember him. Of course I do, nasty creature. What of him?"

"Do you remember my telling you that he looked like somebody that I had seen before? Well, I've found out who he looks like."

"Really, who is it?"

"Like me."

"Nonsense. That horrid, rough man look like you? Besides he is dark and you are fair."

"That is true, but our features are alike, and above all, we have the same expression; especially when angry. I look like papa."

"I think you're the queerest girl for getting odd fancies into your head that I ever saw."

"I wonder who the man can be."

"Some drunken loafer, of course. Come on. If we don't start now, we shall have no time to ride before dinner."

Lillian said no more, but, gathering up her skirts led the way. Near the door a groom was holding their horses, which he led up for them to mount. Lillian was quickly seated but Violet had more difficulty, as her horse was skittish. At last, however, she managed to put her dainty foot in the stirrup, and then, with a jump and a laugh, she was safely perched in the saddle, and gathered up the reins.

With their departure and the disappearance of the groom the lawn was deserted, except by half a dozen sparrows. Not for long, however. The sparrows were suddenly scattered in flight by a tall, thin man striding towards the house. The footman who answered his ring said that Mr. Laford had come home from business early, but had immediately gone out driving, with Mrs. Laford.

"Well, I'll have to wait for him then," said the visitor resignedly, taking out a newspaper. "I'll sit outside here."

The visitor had finished his paper, and was engaged in examining an account-book, when the sound of wheels caused him to look up.

"Ah! Mr. Steelyard," said Mr. Laford. "I'll see you in a moment. James, take this gentleman to my office."

Mrs. Laford entered the house, and the detective

was shown by the servant to the private sanctum, where he waited for his employer.

Mr. Laford seated himself in front of his desk and waited for what the detective had to say.

Mr. Steelyard had studied how to be impressive. He began with solemnity :

“ I can’t say I’ve got very agreeable news for you, sir.”

“ Never mind. Let me hear it.”

“ The young man we know of has been getting into pretty tough company.”

“ What sort ? ”

“ Anarchists ! ”

The detective was greatly pleased with the effect produced by this word. Laford started forward, seized both arms of his chair, and gazed at his informant with wide-open eyes.

He settled himself back again presently, and said, “ Well what else could have been expected of the young scoundrel ? What do you suppose they are up to ? ”

“ I don’t know yet, exactly, except general devilment which they are always plotting. One of my men followed him to a meeting last night, but he didn’t have the password (my man didn’t, that is) and they wouldn’t let him in. He tried but it was no good. Then, when the meeting was over, the young fellow went off with two women to the editorial office of the *Firebrand*. My man followed him, and seen him setting by the window talking to the women. After that he went home. He didn’t get there till about three o’clock in the morning.”

Laford looked annoyed. "This thing is really getting dangerous," he said. "If it wasn't for the infernal, abominable scandal it would make, I'd notify the police. Haven't you any idea what they were plotting last night?"

"The usual thing, I suppose. Murder and arson and robbery. That's what it always is."

"Damn them! Something must be done," and he began walking angrily up and down the room. "Isn't there some means of getting the fellow quietly out of the way? Railroading him to prison, or something of that sort?"

"It would be hard to do that without the papers getting on to it."

"We can buy up these cursed reporters, can't we?"

"Maybe so."

"Where was this first meeting?"

"At No. 171 Yonge St."

"An infernal nest of scoundrels! The place ought to be raided, and every one of them strung up. Where did he pick up those women that he went with afterwards?"

"They were at the meeting."

"So there are women among them?"

"Yes, and they're worse than the men. My man thinks they were both foreigners. They talked like it."

"Such people ought to be shipped back to wherever they came from the minute they land."

"So they ought."

Laford walked up and down for some time in deep thought. Many plans for ridding himself of this

incumbrance which had so unexpectedly sprung up from the past, filled his mind. The imperturbable detective, calm in the consciousness of being well-paid for his time, did nothing to disturb the reverie of his patron. His jaws even, moved in a subdued manner, and when compelled to spit, the act was performed with a delicate consideration of his employer's abstraction.

At last Laford ceased walking:

"There's nothing else to be done. The fellow must be put behind stone walls. If he had come to me when he first came here and claimed his relationship (on the quiet, of course), I would have met him in a fair and liberal spirit. But when a man starts in to fight me, I don't care who he is,——"

Laford took half a dozen strides back and forth with clenched hands and blazing eyes:—

"There's no use in talking about it, Mr. Steel-yard, there is only one thing to be done; and what that is, I have told you. The question for you is—will you do it?

The detective's eyes were fixed on the floor.

"It's an ugly job, sir," he said after some consideration.

"It's a job that will net you from five to ten thousand dollars according to the length of time he's put in for."

* * * * *

That evening the central office at Chicago received the following telegram:

"Send on Jim right away. Very delicate job.
"STEELYARD."

CHAPTER XIII.

MEANWHILE the two girls were cantering homeward. The élite of New Manchester were driving home to dinner. Near the church, an approaching cloud of dust gradually revealed a pair of bays, a tea-cart, a big cigar, and Mr. Frank Briarly. That gentleman was put into a quandary by the appearance of the ladies. He felt it incumbent on him to take off his hat with one hand and remove his cigar with the other. But both his hands were engaged in holding the bays. Before he could make up his mind what to do, he was whirled past.

Then a landau rolling leisurely along, conveyed Mrs. Van Benthuysen, who bowed rather stiffly under her black lace parasol. She had heard that Violet had said that the bonnet worn by her (Mrs. Van Benthuysen) in church the Sunday before, resembled a florist's window. This she resented, and her relations with Miss Eversley were somewhat strained.

Next came the little cadet, perched on a raw-boned sorrel of imposing height. He blushed, and longed for courage as warriors yearn on the battle-field. Oh! for nerves of steel that would enable him to wheel his charger into line with hers. But, brave as he was, his heart failed him, and he cantered mournfully on.

Then came a dashing phaeton drawn by black ponies,

glittering in burnished brass; behind them, nonchalantly holding the ribbons, a young lady, whose fair complexion, was enhanced by a black Gainsborough hat and feathers. She was Mrs. Devoe, the widow of a rich manufacturer, who had lately died at a ripe old age. She, too, had a grudge against Violet. Violet had said that she (Mrs. Devoe) wanted to catch Victor; and the widow was resolved to have her revenge. But no one would have suspected it from the gracious manner in which she bowed and smiled.

Close behind came a basket phaeton drawn by two white ponies, and carrying two persons, the sight of whom made Violet's teeth close hard. Miss Locus had the reins, and she blushed and looked embarrassed as she nodded to the girls. Victor, lazily reclining on the cushions beside her lifted his hat and smiled.

“She’s taking him home to dinner,” said Violet.

“Undoubtedly.”

“What possesses him to go? He can’t bear her.”

“I think he likes her very well.”

“Did you *ever* see even *her* look so homely as she did this afternoon?”

“Don’t be spiteful, Vi. You seem to have taken a strong dislike to her. What has she ever done to you? She seems to me to be a very harmless, inoffensive sort of girl.”

“Oh! my! yes.”

As she spoke, they passed a small man, with a black moustache, who stood tapping his toe with a gold-headed cane. A few strides more brought them

opposite another person, the sight of whom caused Violet to start in her saddle.

“Did you see him?” she said, when they had swept past.

“Yes.”

“You didn’t look at him. You looked straight ahead of you all the time.”

“I saw him, though.”

“He looked straight at you. He didn’t look at me once. I’d have been worse frightened if he had.”

As she spoke, the horses swung into their own gateway.

Nomanson watched the horses gallop up the avenue, and then he stepped forward from the wall, and sauntered towards the man with the gold-headed cane. He passed him with a half smile, and presently turned to see if he was following. He was.

Nomanson stopped, and the man went slower until finally he too stopped, deeply interested in observing something on the opposite side of the street.

Nomanson watched him, and said to himself:

“Good for you, my friend, you’re helping me to make a beginning. John Laford loves money, and you and I together are making him spend it. What a blockhead I have been, to have begun the very thing I came here for, and never to have known it until other people told me.”

As he walked away the something across the street lost its interest for the other man, who resumed his stroll in the same direction.

Presently a broad, middle-aged man with a German

face, met Nomanson and shook hands. The detective passed them and halted to gaze intently at a distant point, keeping his back to them, but listening.

“How is it, young man, that you are not at work to-day?” the German was saying.

“Got a holiday; factory closed.”

“Ha! a lock-out?”

“Well, not exactly. Too many goods in the market, so we are working on half time; and half pay, too.”

“Abominable. Is it not amazing that the people can not see there is something out of joint about our present system? Here are a thousand men like you, willing and anxious to work, yet compelled to be idle. Has it ever struck you, my brother, that all revolutions have been the work of a few devoted ones, while the bulk of the people had no more to do with them than the cattle in the fields? Look back a hundred years: three thousand ragged, half-starved, half-frozen Americans at Valley Forge, upholding the cause of Freedom (as they understood it), and three million Americans comfortably lodged at home awaiting the issue.”

“You are right.”

“Yes, my boy, you and I must suffer toil, privation, wounds—aye, death itself—all to break the yoke from the necks of these human oxen, who care nothing. Are you ready for it?”

“Yes; put down my name among the new three thousand.”

“Good; it is there already. I knew you were to be one of us when I first saw you. How is your

friend?" he added, after a pause, pointing significantly over his shoulder towards the little man with the cane.

"I suppose he is earning his money."

"We may make him and his friends useful to the cause."

"How?"

"They will aid us to put the capitalists on the wrong scent whenever it may be necessary. Farewell, my brother."

They parted, smiling. The little man, well satisfied with himself, made an entry in his notebook before he loitered after Nomanson. He had to quicken his pace, however, for it was near dinner-time, and the young man's appetite was urging him on. They soon left St. Joseph's Place, and descended the hill-side towards the river, down the street of cottages into the "business" part of the town. On past stores and offices, over the stone bridge, towards the tall chimneys of Locustown. The people thickened as they went on, for the six o'clock whistles had blown, and the factories that were still working on full time had disgorged their workers into the streets. But, though impeded, Nomanson worked his way so rapidly that his pursuer nearly lost him several times. At last he reached the shabby brick house that was the nearest approach to a home that he had. He plunged down the area steps and disappeared. The little man stood on the opposite curbstone and whistled softly. As soon as he saw a shabbily-dressed man with red whiskers and a briar-wood pipe strolling along on the opposite side of the street, he de-

parted. As he walked he glanced over the following record in his notebook:

“Went on at 9.15 a. m., August 30, outside factory. J. N. came out at 12 m., and eat lunch on a truck with two other men and two girls. Watched them from window of small restaurant opposite. About 12.30 p. m. J. N. went home. At 4 p. m. came out. Went to St. Joseph’s Pl. Walked along to end. Saw Mr. and Mrs. L. in a carriage, but didn’t see him. Stopped and looked after them. Saw young Mr. L. and Miss Locus. Stopped and looked after them, too. Saw Miss L. and Miss E. on horseback. Miss L. didn’t see him, but Miss E. did. Watched them to house. Went to go home. Met man that knew him. Stopped to talk. I managed to overhear conversation. Talk mostly about Anarchy. Anarchists have list of 3,000 names of men ready for any Desperate Deed. J. N. asked to have name put on list, and was put. Went home to dinner. Went off duty 6.27 p. m., after seeing T. go on.”

Nomanson on entering the basement was met by a chorus of words and laughter from the dining room. Amid the general disturbance he entered and took his seat almost without being noticed. The young ladies were rallying a good-natured young gentleman, who bore their attack in silence, alternately grinning and blowing into a spoon from which he had blown all the soup without being aware of it. Nomanson gathered that Mr. Wayne was accused of having two girls, and of dividing his attentions so adroitly as to keep each fair one in ignorance of his attachment to the other.

The attack, however, was repulsed at all points. Mr. Wayne's smiling urbanity had never deserted him, and had enabled him to quench all the fiery darts of the fair enemies who surrounded him. But, in no way discouraged, they sought a new field of conquest. They all had a certain fear of Nomanson, and might not have had the courage to attack him, had not the landlady, with a sort of stupid bravery, led the assault.

"What makes you so quiet to-night, Mr. Nomanson?" she inquired, with a broad smile.

"Because I don't want to talk, I suppose," was the ungracious answer.

"My, you ain't very polite," and the smile vanished suddenly.

"You asked me a question, and I answered it. What more do you expect? You don't want me to tell a lie, I suppose."

"No, sir, no, certainly not. Please yourself, Mr. Nomanson. If you don't want to talk, I don't want you to; no, not at all. I want everybody to do as they please in my house, so long as they don't interfere with nobody else; that's what I want, and nobody can say otherwise. I've kep' a boardin' house now, twenty year, and all my boarders has always found me very accommodatin'. I'll leave that to them, Mr. Nomanson."

There was an awkward silence for a moment, broken by Miss Simpson.

"Us folks ain't smart enough for Mr. Nomanson, Mrs. Smith. But when he gets among them foreign friends of his, then he'll talk like a house afire."

“What foreigners do you mean, Liz?”

“Why them Dutchmen and Dagos that go around with red ribbons; I can’t think what they call ‘em. The people that gave the picnic last month at Maple Grove.”

“Oh! I know what they call them folks. It’s Annykists.” This came from a short, black-eyed, round-faced young woman, at the other end of the table.

“Yes, that’s what it is, Annykists.”

“But they’re dreadful people. They want to murder everybody and blow up everything. Dear me, Mr. Nomanson, I hope you won’t let them set off a charge of that dreadful stuff they use under this house; as long as I’m in it, at any rate.”

“No, Miss Jennings, you’re in no danger. They don’t blow up any good people.”

“My! There ain’t much chance for me then,” said Lizzie.

“No danger for you either. Only for very wicked people, like me.”

This broadside rather staggered the assailants for a moment, but they presently returned to the attack.

“I know why Mr. Nomanson likes to go with them Annykists. I do really, no foolin’. Now you’d never guess the reason, Miss Jennings.”

“No, never. I was always awful poor at guessin’.”

“Well, it’s because he’s got a mash on one of ‘em.”

“You don’t mean it! Why, I thought they was all men.”

“My, no. Some of them’s ladies; and they shoot just like the fellows shoot.”

"Now, really, and what does Mr. Nomanson's girl look like?"

"You'd better ask him. Most likely he thinks she's pretty. I think she's awful homely."

"Pshaw, Liz. Any one can see you're jealous. Ain't she, Mr. Nomanson?"

"Oh! You horrid thing, to talk like that. I won't sit at the table with you if you don't stop. You make me blush."

"Well, I always thought till now, that *you* was his mash."

"Go 'way. I think you're dreadful. Ain't she, Mr. Nomanson?"

He made no reply. He was engaged on a piece of apple pie with a pachydermatous crust, but the magnificent appetite of youth was not to be daunted by such a discouraging trifle.

"If you'd been with me yesterday," Lizzie went on, after a moment's pause, "you'd have seen he had another mash besides me. He was walking with her up Main Street. Oh! you bet she was a daisy. If you could have seen the hat she had on! It just knocked me silly. I never saw anything like it. It was about that high, and that wide, and green and purple flowers, and a dark green muslin dress. I don't know why it is those yellow people will wear green. It's awful unbecoming."

Greatly to the young lady's vexation, Nomanson's face continued impassive. She determined to try another line of attack.

"Do have some cheese, Mr. Nomanson," she said, pushing towards him a plate containing some foss'il

specimens. "Won't you have some more tea? Mrs. Smith, I know Mr. Nomanson wants some more tea. Now don't be bashful, about asking for anything you want. Get him another piece of pie, Mrs. Smith. I know he's real fond of sweet things, but you don't know how nice apple pie is with vinegar, Mr. Nomanson. Do have some vinegar."

"Never mind the girls, Mr. Nomanson," said Mrs. Smith, smiling; for she had quite recovered her good humor by this time. "They don't mean nothin' only they must have their fun."

To all of which no answer. He gulped down the remainder of his tea, and rose.

Just about at that time, Miss Eversley, having changed her riding habit for a white dinner dress, came tripping down to the dining room in the Laford mansion. The table was laid and the light of the sinking sun was flashed back from glass and silver in fiery sparkles. Some letters by the evening mail had been placed beside the plates. There were none for Violet, and, with a little pout, she went around the table, examining the others. "George and Miss Wickham," she said, glancing at two that lay beside Lillian's plate; "Aunt Clara," removing her gaze to Mrs. Laford's; "and I don't know any of uncle's; oh! yes; that big sprawling one is Mr. Briarly's—the horrid creature—I never *can*; no, never. I'll run away with a bookkeeper first. That's a queer one. Looks like a child's handwriting. Postmarked New York. Some boy that wants a situation, I suppose. Pshaw! why don't they come. I'm half-starved. Dear! if I was sure

Lil wouldn't find it out and laugh at me I'd steal a banana. I wonder what George is writing to *her* about. I think it's real mean in him not to come and see us. I suppose he *is* very busy, but he might come for a week in summer. I've a good mind to write and give him a blowing-up, only it would make him too conceited."

She went to one of the long windows looking out at the trees and the lawn, mottled with light and shade. Then she strolled back to the table and picked up the letter with the peculiar address. "I know it's horribly mean and unladylike," she said; "but I'm going to, so there!" The envelope was made of cheap, thin material; and the words inside could be seen indistinctly. With a guilty blush, and a furtive glance over her shoulder, she pressed the paper between her thumbs and fingers, until she could read quite distinctly :

"Not a word from my poor boy since he left me. I don't know what too do. Please if you know anything about him please write and let me here. I am so lonly and hart broken please John Laford do me this one favor I have been little enough trouble to you God knows all these years and this is all I ask. So please do and oblige

MARY R. WILSON.

P. S. Address as before Mrs. Mary Robarts."

"A woman!" said Violet, her eyes dilating. "A woman; and there's some mystery. Some New York woman writing about her son. And she might have made trouble for him if she had chosen." She put down the letter. "Oh! uncle John, I'm

afraid you've been a wicked man. Perhaps not, I'll give you the benefit of the doubt, but it's very suspicious. Oh! dear! how naughty these men are. I suppose Victor's just as bad as the rest of them. Oh! aunt Bessie," (as her aunt entered the room) "what makes you fuss so over your toilet? And I just won't ride any more if it makes me so hungry, and that's all there is about it."

When they were all seated at the table Violet watched her uncle closely from under her long lashes. She trembled inwardly, when she saw the look on his face as he picked up Mary Wilson's letter. "If he ever should suspect what I'd done, he'd kill me," she thought, "but, my! isn't this salmon nice. Auntie, dear, may I have some more drawn butter, please?"

"Do any of you know where Victor is?" inquired Mrs. Laford as she helped her niece.

Violet frowned a little, and said nothing. Lillian answered:

"I saw him driving home with Miss Locus. I suppose he'll dine there."

"Very likely. I'm glad he seems to like her. She is a very well-bred, ladylike girl."

"I can't say as much for her relations," said Violet maliciously; "Her aunt for instance."

"I have never found Mrs. Smith at all disagreeable," was the guarded answer.

"But not very elegant."

"You ought not to criticise a person so much older than yourself, my dear."

Violet took the rebuke very meekly. In fact, she

scarcely heard it. She was too much absorbed in watching her uncle. He was much more interesting to her now than ever before. He was a man with a history now; with a skeleton in the closet, and he never suspected that she knew anything about it. The thought was so delicious that she didn't care about Victor's having gone to dine with Miss Locus.

In reality they were all mistaken about that. The young gentleman, much to his would-be hostess' disappointment, had pleaded a previous engagement at the club, and had been proof against her blandishments. He had alighted at the gate and left the ponies to carry their unhappy mistress to the house, while he walked away whistling gaily to himself, swinging a formidable cane, and his broad trousers vainly striving to conceal the outlines of his muscular legs. So he came to a massive gateway of twisted iron, with a huge lamp on each side, the entrance to the Arimathean Club.

The building was a large one, of red brick, with stone facings; and its great windows of plate-glass were crimson in the rays of the setting sun. He entered the cool shade of the wide hall, and ascended a broad staircase with massive balustrade, lighted at night by lamps held by bronze figures representing half-naked negro slaves. As he reached the top he heard a harsh laugh, and saw Frank Briarly stretched in a reclining chair, in the smoking room, a cigar between his fingers, and his hat on the back of his head. He turned away to the dining room.

There he found several choice spirits awaiting him,

and they were soon engaged in the delightful exercise of satisfying their vigorous young appetites with the most delicate food and drink that wealth could provide. Victor was holding between his eye and the light a glass, and criticising the color of the champagne, when Mr. Briarly, having finished his cigar and a cocktail, and a series of stories anent his conquests among the fair sex, walked into the room.

“Oh! good afternoon, Mr. Victor,” he said. “I’m afraid I must trouble you to carry an apology for me. I was on the boulevard to-day, and the horses were going so devilish fast that I was carried past Miss Violet, and Miss Lily before I had time fairly to see them. If you’ll be good enough to say that I didn’t mean to be rude, you’ll confer a great favor on yours truly.”

Victor set down his glass, leaned back in his chair and smiled as he answered:

“Why certainly, Mr. Briarly, by all means. But I don’t think you need distress yourself. They probably didn’t either of them notice it.”

Briarly flushed, and turned on his heel. As he walked away he muttered: “By—— my young friend, I’ll be even with you for this, and don’t you forget it.”

Victor’s party stared, lifted their eyebrows, looked at each other and smiled so significantly, that his smile suddenly changed to a frown, and his face reddened.

“Pshaw!” he said to himself, “what a fool I was to be rude to the fellow. I wish Vi would go and live with some of her other relations.”

CHAPTER XIV.

ON the arrival, from the central kennel, of a fresh hound of exceptionally keen scent, Mr. Steelyard lost no time in setting him on the trail.

Nomanson noticed, next day, a new face at table, rather fat, with blue eyes, and its owner seemed unobtrusive, and rather shy. By the following day, however, his shyness appeared to be wearing off. He exchanged pleasantries with the women, and passed cigars around among the men. He said that he was a plasterer in search of employment, had just come from Chicago, and that his name was James Brown.

Every day, he went out, professedly, in search of work; and, every day, returned unsuccessful, but always cheerful, sociable and good-natured. He became a general favorite, especially with the women.

Towards the end of the week, Mr. Brown began to take an interest in Nomanson. He offered him cigars, and invited him out to drink; and, from the subject of his own inability to find employment, the conversation naturally drifted to the tyranny of capital, and the desperate condition of the masses.

On Saturday, after dinner, Brown strolled into Nomanson's room smoking, and as usual, offered a cigar which the latter, as usual, declined, rising at the same time.

“Going out? Suppose we go to the Opera House

and see the star before she leaves town ? She won't be there next week."

"I've no money to spend on that sort of thing."

"Oh ! that's all right. I'll set up the treat. Come ahead."

"That's not my style. If you want to take anybody to the theatre there are plenty of girls in the house."

"Well, I won't go then. Where are you going ?"

"I'm going to hear some fellows talk. They are tremendous fellows at talking. If you want to hear capital denounced, come with me."

"I'll go you."

Brown was not fond of walking, but humored his companion, who declined to take a street car.

"What sort of a place are we going to ?" inquired Brown, after they had walked a short distance.

"It is called Aetna Hall, over in Iron City. We'll have the pleasure of listening to a man named Rothmann, another named Pulaski, and a new fellow from Chicago, named Wood. He's to be the great gun of the evening."

Brown threw away the stump of his cigar and began to whistle as they wormed their way through the Saturday night crowd. Smartly dressed young saleswomen, walking arm in arm and wheeling suddenly to investigate an attractive shop window, middle-aged women anxious to provide their supplies for Sunday and get back to the children ; young men out for a "night of it" just beginning to show the effects of the first few drinks ; little girls with pitchers of beer ; little boys pursued by

big ones; all these and other obstacles to rapid progress multiplied at every step. At last, the lights ahead were seen gleaming on water, and they came to a bridge which they crossed into Iron City. The streets here were more densely crowded than the one they had left, and with a worse element. The men were more intoxicated, the women and children more ragged; the whole population noisier and dirtier; the "gin-palaces" more numerous.

Presently they came to a triangular space, partly filled by a trapezium-shaped building. It was lighted within, and, at the door a man with a red badge, was distributing tracts, and inviting the passers-by to enter. Over the door a transparency announced a mass-meeting of workingmen that would be addressed by Robert Wood of Chicago.

"This is the place," said Nomanson. "They call it Aetna Hall. Come around this way, and we'll get on the platform."

At the side of the building was a door, set in a square tower, over which, in a niche, was a stone image of a bare-armed and bare-legged man of immense muscle, leaning on a long-handled sledge hammer.

"That's supposed to be Vulcan," said Nomanson, pointing upward.

Mr. Brown had no idea who Vulcan was, but not liking to appear ignorant, he merely remarked: "Is that so?"

Nomanson greeted the doorkeeper on entering, and they ascended a winding stair that led up to a door opening on the platform of the hall.

There was a glare of light and a strong odor of kerosene.

As they took seats at the rear of the platform, Nomanson returned the salutations of several of those near him. Presently, the hum of voices ceased, as Pulaski stepped forward and began to speak in English. He called the meeting to order and nominated Rothmann as chairman. The latter took the chair amid a storm of applause, made a short speech, and introduced Robert Wood as the speaker of the evening; "a man who has fought for the liberty of the negro, the liberty of the Frenchman, the liberty of the Irishman, (great applause); a man who, through devotion to the cause of liberty has spent twenty years of his life in prison; Robert Wood, the Abolitionist, the Communist, and the Fenian."

Amid tremendous hand-clapping there stood up an old, bent man in a black silk skullcap; a pale-faced, white-headed patriarch; with mild blue eyes, and a thick underlip. Suddenly, a female figure started up near the front of the platform, and pointed toward him dramatically. Nomanson recognized Élise Larose. "Look!" she cried. "Behold him, the victim of three races of tyrants. Broken in health, broken in strength, but in spirit—never to be broken."

A low murmur ran through the hall as she sat down, and the old man began his speech. He spoke well, relating what purported to be a history of the advance of freedom during twenty-five years, but what was really a history of his own adventures.

He held the attention of the audience for an hour. Then Rothmann and Pulaski spoke in the usual Anarchist strain; when a general invitation having been given, Elise arose. "Women of America, you ask me whether it is becoming to my sex that I, a woman, should address you to night. Yes, a thousand times, yes, for without woman, you can not look for anything in man. He will not move, unless she moves beside him. There has been no great movement of any kind in the world, where the women have not been the movers. Yes, it does become a woman to speak. The men will not strike the yoke from their necks unless you women bid them to. Be speakers, then all of you! Go forth and preach to your husbands, your brothers, your fathers, your sons. This is not the dark ages. We are not barbarians. No, it is time for woman to stir herself, to think, to speak, to act.

"But you ask me, what shall you say. You have heard it. These men have told you." (Waving her hand towards the speakers of the evening.) "They have told you your rights, and how to get them. It is not worth while for me to tell you over again what you have heard already. But it *is* worth while for you to say it over again—again a thousand times. Say it in your homes, say it in the store, say it on the street corner, say it everywhere. Speak until you make the men stand up to strike the fetters from their limbs. Then the time for speaking will be past—it will be time to act."

Shrill and passionate, her voice penetrated to every part of the hall. She threw herself into a chair,

flushed with her own vehemence, apparently taking no notice of the applause that her words had evoked.

Three other speakers of mediocre ability followed. Then, seeing that the audience showed signs of having had enough, Pulaski moved an adjournment. Stamm proposed that a collection be taken up first, whereupon the meeting began to adjourn without further ceremony.

The Anarchists on the platform then began to shake hands and talk. Nomanson presently saw Vera making her way towards him. She offered her hand and smiled in fraternal greeting.

"I see you have brought a friend to-night," she said. "Is he also a friend of the cause?"

"He is of age. Let him speak for himself. You heard the lady's question, Mr. Brown. Don't wait for an introduction. There's no formality here. Speak up, and say whether you are a friend of the cause."

"I believe I am."

"Really!" exclaimed Vera, a note of surprise in her voice.

The broad, good-humored smile suddenly left Brown's face. For a moment he eyed the Russian keenly; her look was very demure. Then, in an instant, the smile came back, and he asked, "Why not?"

"I don't know. A fancy of mine. Don't ask a woman for a reason. It's her privilege not to have any."

"All right, it goes. But I'll make you change your mind about me. I believe that the tyranny of

capital ought to be put down, and the sooner the better."

"A good sentiment. You are willing then to risk your life for an idea?"

"Well, when it comes to that, I don't know. I'd just as soon live if I could."

"The tyranny of capital can be put down only by force and he who shoots must take his chance of being shot."

"All right. I hope I'll be able to do my share when the time comes."

At that moment Stamm and a German friend of the "cause" approached and cordially greeted the new comer. Ardetti proposed that they adjourn to a wine room below, and discuss a bottle or two of Rhine wine. The invitation was accepted.

When the wine had been finished, the party rose. But at the door, they encountered Rothmann and Élise who insisted on their coming back for another bottle, so they reseated themselves. The new comers were made acquainted with Brown, and welcomed him to the support of the "cause."

"Yes, my friend, the cause was never in a better state," said Rothmann, leaning back in his chair, and resting his fingers lightly on the shoulder of Élise. "This winter will be a hard one. The price of coal, bread, and, in short, all the necessities of life have risen steadily during the past year, and they have gone up to stay. But I don't need to tell you all this. You know it. And you know that wages have gone down. You know too that there is no more grinding and inhuman set of monopolists in America

than we have in this town ; that the poor here are worse lodged, worse fed, worse paid, than in any nine cities out of ten. What say you my friends, am I right ? ”

“ You’re right, sir, undoubtedly,” answered Brown, nodding his head. “ But there’s one thing you haven’t mentioned. It’s estimated that there are two thousand families in this city to-night who can’t get work at any price.”

“ I think three thousand would be nearer the mark,” said Stamm.

“ If that is so,” continued Rothmann, “ isn’t the cause bound to advance during the coming winter ? Hunger and cold must open the eyes of these people. When a man is warm and well fed he is apt to think that everything is lovely, but when his clothes are in rags and his stomach is empty, he begins to think there is something wrong with society. We must seize this opportunity, my friends. The iron is hot. We must strike now—at this moment,” and he brought down his clenched fist on the table to emphasize his sentiments.

“ I agree with you, sir,” said Brown. “ The more time we take to get ready, the more time we give the enemy to get ready. If the blow had been struck two years ago, we would not now have an armory here for the Thirty-third Regiment of Militia, fit to stand a siege by the ‘ Army of the Potomac.’ ”

Rothmann laughed, quietly ; “ Perhaps ; but your ‘ Army of the Potomac ’ had no dynamite ! The armory of the Thirty-third would not stand a siege from us for twenty-four hours.”

Brown's eyes sparkled, as they glanced, for a moment, towards Nomanson.

"It wouldn't be a bad job," he said, "to blow up the concern, some fine night."

"When the time comes, my friend," said Rothmann. "We have lost ground before by being too hasty. Wait."

"Well, any time you want two men to do the job, I might find them for you."

Again, for a moment, he scanned Nomanson's face. As he turned his eyes he met Vera's fixed on his own. He met her gaze with a smile.

"What do you think of the idea, ma'am?" he inquired.

"Very good, but the time is not yet ripe. I trust to you to curb the impatience of our young friend there. Don't allow him to do anything rash. His life is valuable to the cause that we both have at heart."

"You're right. I'll take as good care of him as if I was his mother. Won't I, my boy?"

He slapped Nomanson on the shoulder, who, not liking personal familiarities, moved his shoulder from under his companion's hand, and Brown, perceiving that his action was not agreeable, instantly withdrew his hand, while still retaining his agreeable smile.

Presently Stamm passed around his cigarette-case. All, save Nomanson, accepted, and the air was soon thick with smoke. The conversation grew more animated, Brown joining in it freely, while Vera watched him.

Vera proposed that the party should go to her

lodgings and finish the evening with some music. As they rose, she took Nomanson's arm, saying, with a laugh, "Now, if you please, I'd like you to be my escort. Your friend will take *Elise*, won't you, Mr. Brown?"

"With pleasure, if I may be allowed," he bowed, and offered his arm to the French woman.

Vera walked fast and was soon twenty yards ahead of the others, when, feeling assured that there was no danger of being overheard, she said :

"Would you like me to tell you something about your new friend, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, certainly. To tell you the truth, I know very little about him myself."

"Right. You know very little about him. Very little."

"Well, out with it. What do you know that I don't?"

"Something that will astonish you. He is one of the detectives."

Nomanson was startled, and half turned, but recovered himself and walked on. Presently he asked, "How do you know this?"

"A friend of mine, and of yours told me."

"How did he find it out?"

"By keeping his eyes open."

"Pshaw! Have some mercy on my stupidity, and talk plain."

"Well, I'll humor you," she said, laughing. "Here it is so a baby could understand it. You have a friend, and he is so much interested in you that he keeps a watch on your enemies. One of

your enemies is a certain Mr. Steelyard, and when this Mr. Steelyard is seen conversing with a certain Mr. Brown, your friend draws a conclusion. Do I make it plain?"

"Yes, very. But who is this friend?"

"Never mind." If it had not been so dark he might have seen the color in her face as she said this. "It is as well perhaps not to know too much just yet. We don't know yet what game he is playing. Meanwhile, beware of him. Rivers are bad places to walk by, with a *friend* of that kind. All solitary places are better traveled alone than in such company. Keep with the crowd if you would be safe. But, whatever you do, don't despise the enemy."

Nomanson's blood was boiling. He longed to spring at his treacherous acquaintance. However, he restrained himself, and by the time they reached their destination, he had cooled sufficiently to appear natural. Vera led the party to the second story room inhabited by the two women, where they seated themselves on the shabby chairs and sofa. She then lighted a lamp with a shade of red glass. Nomanson admired the effect. The light seemed to soften the sordid aspect of the room. "What a pretty light," he said to himself. "How it would have improved our old place in New York! How I would have enjoyed fixing a shade like that to make the room look pretty for *that woman*, before I knew."

There was a piano in the room, at which Stamm seated himself. Vera took a violin from its case, and tuned it. Elise reclined in an armchair, and blew cigarette smoke at the ceiling.

Presently the music began. Both were good performers, and Nomanson was soon absorbed in the music. He was not so well pleased when Brown accepted an invitation to "favor them," and wondered how Vera could be such a hypocrite as to play an accompaniment while the spy sang. He was a good singer, but Nomanson took no pleasure in listening. On one thing he was determined, whether his Anarchist friends approved of it or not. He would cut the scoundrel's acquaintance. He would not even walk home with him that night.

The party broke up at last.

As Nomanson started, Vera touched his arm, and whispered in his ear: "Be careful. Remember what I told you." He nodded, and followed the others to the street.

The foreigners and the German-American said farewell to the other two, as they separated. When they were alone, Nomanson turned to his companion.

"I am going home by myself." He said.

Brown opened his eyes, screwed up his mouth, and uttered a whistle of astonishment.

"What's the matter?" he inquired.

"I'm going round by the South bridge. Of course, you will go the way we came."

"But why do you want to go so far out of your way? It's two miles further, if it's a foot. You must be crazy—at this time of night, too."

Nomanson started to go away, but Brown followed, and called after him. "If you're bound to go that way, I'll go with you."

"No you won't."

“Why not?”

“Because if you go that way, I’ll go the other.”

“Oh! You’re mad at me, are you?”

“I don’t want your company, anyhow.”

“You need a few lessons in manners, my young friend.”

The detective halted, and allowed his man to shake him off, apparently. In fact, he walked a short distance towards the North bridge. In so doing he passed two female figures, so muffled in large cloaks that it would have been impossible to see their faces, had he wished to do so. He merely glanced at them casually, however, without apparent interest. When he had gone a short distance, he reversed, and once more was moving in the opposite direction. Crossing the street, he soon found himself abreast of the two women. By that time he could see the tall figure of Nomanson as it passed the gas lamps, one after another.

The detective soon noticed that the women were hurrying. He and his man were walking easily, at a brisk swinging pace, but the other two were evidently making a great effort; and thereby, just keeping their distance from increasing. In the quiet of the deserted street the quick tap of their heels was very distinct. It seemed as if Nomanson ought to hear it. If he did he took no notice.

The young workman reached the South bridge and crossed it. Halting for a moment, he looked into the water, as though interested in the long double line of lights reflected there. The others waited in the shadow of the houses until he went on

again. His course led towards St. Joseph's Place; that of the women towards the boulevard. Brown followed Nomanson, who went steadily on, to the Avenue bridge. Five minutes more brought him home. Brown was a hundred feet behind and on the opposite side of the street. Nomanson let himself in with a latch-key. Presently, Brown walked over after him, and entered also; but he left the door ajar, and stood peering out with much interest. After two or three minutes, he went out closing the door softly, and took his way towards the river.

As he turned a corner he stepped quickly into a doorway. A moment more, and two figures draped in heavy shawls also turned the corner and passed him—stopped—turned—looked up and down the street—and seemed to be in doubt. They talked earnestly with much gesticulation. He strained his ears in vain to hear what they said. Finally, they walked on and disappeared.

When they were gone the spy came out of his retreat, and on his way home with his hands in his pockets he whistled softly, and wrestled with one of the knottiest professional problems that he had ever encountered.

CHAPTER XV.

ON the morning after the meeting at *Ætna Hall* Nomanson was starting on his way to work. On the sidewalk stood Brown, puffing his cigar. Nomanson would have passed without a word, but Brown intercepted him.

“See here, young man! You didn’t treat me like a gentleman last night.”

“What of it? Speak out, if you want anything of me.”

“I say again, you didn’t use me as a gentleman.”

“All right. I don’t pretend to be a gentleman, or to know anything about that species of animal. You may be one for anything I know. We’ll grant that you are, and that I used you in a way that wasn’t suited to your constitution. What are you going to do about it?”

“To do you a kindness.”

Nomanson opened his eyes. “What do you mean?”

“Just what I say.”

Nomanson turned, and started to go. Again the spy prevented him, saying, “hold on,” and catching his sleeve.

“See here, my good man,” said Nomanson, “I haven’t got the whole morning free. I’ve got to go to work. Some day I’ll take a day off and listen to you. Meanwhile, think up what you want to say

and how to put it in plain language. I'm very stupid."

"You're an ill-mannered hog," exclaimed the detective, fairly losing his temper. "I want to do you a favor because I've taken a fancy to you, and you treat me like a pickpocket. Do you know there's a conspiracy against you—you young fool?"

"I've known it for the last six weeks."

"Not quite. It hasn't been going that long." There was a half smile on Brown's face then as he spoke. He had received a valuable piece of information.

"Well, over five weeks, any way."

"Do you know who is in it?"

"Yes. You for one."

The spy lifted his eyebrows, and spoke in a tone of simulated surprise.

"Me! How did you find that out?"

"I decline to answer."

"You're sharp. I suppose you know all about it. Well, if you do, I've nothing more to say. But if you want to know anything and you'll make it worth my while, I'll give the thing away. Let's walk down the street."

They started off together. Nomanson was deeply interested, but he was obliged to acknowledge to himself that he had no means of making it "worth the while" of the detective to betray the plot.

"You see," Brown began, when they had walked a few yards, "the man what put us onto this job has gone back on us, and won't put up the dust as he promised; and we intend to get even with him."

“I haven’t got any dust to put up.”

“Your friends might have.”

“I wouldn’t ask them.”

“It would be a good thing for you to know about this.”

“You told me a while ago that you liked me so much you were going to do me a kindness. You seem to have lost all your disinterested affection for me very soon.”

“No, not at all, but I’ve got to make a living out of my business.”

“You won’t make it out of me, that’s certain.”

“You’d better think it over before you give me a positive answer.”

“I don’t need to think it over. I’m as poor as a church mouse, and my friends are the same ; and, anyhow, I wouldn’t ask them for anything.”

“You’d like to know the name of the man at the head of it, wouldn’t you ?”

“I know that already.”

“Well, all right, as we can’t make a bargain, I’ll say good-morning to you.”

Mr. Brown betook himself at once to the Grand Central Hotel. In the smoking room he found Mr. Steelyard sitting in a tilted-back chair, with his feet on the arm of another. His quid for the time had been exchanged for a fragrant Havana. He nodded as his junior entered, but said nothing. Brown drew his chair towards him, seated himself astride of it, placed his arms on the back and gazed fixedly at him, also without speaking.

"Well, Jim," Steelyard inquired at last, "how goes it?"

"Bad. Some fool has given the thing away. Who it is I don't know; most likely one of your men."

Steelyard rose, savagely, and biting the end of his cigar, he said: "Gad! I'd like to know which one it is."

"I don't believe you can find out. I've tried and couldn't. But sit down, and I'll tell you all about it."

He related in full the events of the previous night and his interview with Nomanson that morning. As he listened Steelyard paced up and down, chewing his cigar, which he had allowed to go out, in his excitement. When his companion had finished he uttered a profane expression and flung the remnant of his cigar into the fireplace.

"I'll tell you what, Joe," said Brown, "it was lucky you sent for me. If you hadn't you'd have got into the worst scrape of your life."

Steelyard swore again, still in a state of eruption.

Brown continued:

"I don't need to tell you that the kind of job we've started in on ain't the kind to monkey with. If we *should* give ourselves away it might land *us* in the jug instead of him. The thing has been bungled so far, and we've got to go slow. If we handle it carefully we ought to win the pile yet."

Leaning on the mantelpiece, Steelyard waited for his companion to develop his scheme.

"Now, in the first place, Joe, we must give them plenty of time for their suspicions to subside. We

must make them think we've dropped the whole thing, and to do that we *must* drop it for—well, three months is none too long."

At this point the colloquy was stopped by the entrance of Ardetti. He was well-dressed, and sauntered in, twirling a cane, with the air of one who was quite at home. He affected to be looking for some one; hesitated, consulted his watch, as though disposed to wait a few minutes for the man he expected, and seated himself at a window.

Steelyard, seeing that the stranger intended to stay, proposed that Brown should go with him to his room.

"No," answered Brown, "I shall want to smoke presently, and your room gets too close when you smoke. Let's stay here. The sky looks black, don't it? Shouldn't wonder if we had rain before night."

"Yes," answered the other, sauntering to a window and looking out. "Shouldn't wonder."

The senior detective took out his tobacco and began to chew abstractedly. He seemed absorbed in the outside world, but in reality he was waiting for his companion to speak, for he saw that a new move was to be made. From the corner of his eye he also saw that Brown had drawn a piece of letter paper towards him and was scribbling on it.

Brown scanned the paper for a moment. "I say, Steelyard, look at this. That's better than I used to write, ain't it?"

Steelyard read as follows:

"That fellow is one of the Anarchists. I saw him in the crowd at *Ætna Hall* last night. Thought he

kept where I couldn't see him, but your uncle's eyes are good for something yet. He's here to spy on us. Throw this in the fire and make sure that it burns up. Then write this on a fresh piece of paper, and write it very heavy.

“‘ You are right. What with *those people* suspecting us, and *that person* going back on us and refusing to put up the boodle he promised, there's no use going on with the job. I agree with you, we had better give it up. I'll send the men back to Chicago to-night, and you might just as well go too. I will stay and try to get that person to put up what he owes us. But I will be in Chicago before the end of the week, at latest. This has been a bad job all through, and I'm sorry we ever went into it.’

“ Write this *very heavy*, and blot it with the *clean* blotter. Lay the blotter down and give me the paper. Can't explain further, for the fellow may go any minute.”

Steelyard did as he was told. When Brown had read the paper he nodded, and tore it into very small pieces, *which he left on the table*.

Then after some chat about various matters, Brown shook hands with Steelyard, and said, “Good-bye, old man. I suppose I'll see you in Chicago in a few days.” Steelyard hoped so and accompanied him to the door.

When he found himself alone, Ardetti went over to the table where the two detectives had been sitting. First making sure that he was unobserved, he quickly gathered up the scraps which he wrapped in the blotter, and put in his pocket. Going out he

passed Steelyard in the hall. He saw Brown ahead of him and followed, but it was not the Italian's intention to shadow the detective. He only followed him as far as the Turnpike bridge, where he took a River Line horse-car, leaving the detective to go on towards his boarding house.

At Sixth Street he left the car, and made his way to a house, where a black shield beside the door, bore in gilt letters "Mme. St. Cyr, Parisian Dress-maker."

He rang and was shown into a small parlor, and presently Vera entered. In her eagerness to hear his news, she had left her work without stopping to take off her white apron, or remove the threads that clung to her dress.

"Well," she said, "what have you found out?"

"I hardly know yet, myself," he answered. "I have something here that may be worth knowing. We will see."

He took out the roll, unfolded it, and shook it over the table.

"See if you are smart enough to put those together," he said.

She set to work without a word. Ardetti walked over to a mirror, smoothed out the blotting paper and held it up before the glass.

"I don't think you need bother with those pieces of paper any longer," he said, presently. "I can make out most of it from this. Come here and I'll read it to you."

She came to him, and he slowly read the words that he could decipher.

The few breaks were in a short time supplied by Vera's cleverness in fitting the torn scraps; and they were in possession of supposed confidential information, just as Brown had planned it.

"Where did you get this?" inquired Vera, eagerly.

Ardetti told her.

"You are very clever," said Vera. "But if those detectives had been a little sharper they would have thrown these into the fire. So, Laford has grown tired of being bled, and the spies are to be withdrawn. I don't think there can be any doubt about the meaning."

"There can be no doubt. The persecution is over."

"You have done good service, my friend, and I thank you."

She rose and held out her hand. He grasped it as in a vice.

"Do you thank me in the name of the Cause, or in your own?"

"For,"—she checked herself, looked him straight in the eye, and went on—"the Cause."

His face brightened.

"It is well," he said. "And now, good-bye."

He raised her hand to his lips, and left her. She looked after him with a half-pitying smile.

* * * * *

Two days later, Vera and Nomanson met at the shooting gallery. She put out her hand smiling, and said:

"I suppose you have found out that the shadow dance is over."

He looked blank at first, then understood her and answered :

"Yes, I have seen nothing of them for the last few days. Our friend, Mr. Brown, has also vanished. He received a letter, yesterday morning, that made it necessary for him to go to Chicago at once, so he left by the 12:40 train."

"Yes, and Mr. Steelyard has also ceased to appear in his usual haunts at the Grand Central. I think that affair may be regarded as settled. The question now is, what will Laford do next? You perhaps can tell that better than I can, for you know his motive in setting the dogs on you."

"I don't think he'll be up to any new game. He seems to have grown tired of putting up money, and I suppose anything he tries will prove costly. Most likely he'll let me alone now."

"How did you know that?"

"That fellow Brown told me. He offered to give the thing away if I would pay him for it, but he was disappointed."

"Ah! the treacherous hound. I am almost sorry that he escaped from among us with a whole skin."

And, with a frown, she inserted a cartridge in her rifle.

CHAPTER XVI.

The man who had cast off his mother and sworn revenge on his father was on the eve of his majority—and the birthday of another was near—of One who had come to bring peace and goodwill to men.

The world was preparing to celebrate with joy and gladness the nativity of the man of sorrows who called himself the Son of Man. But only two human beings knew or cared about the birthday of the man who called himself no man's son. Of these two, one was a pale, silent woman who lived alone in the top story of a New York tenement house. For a long time she had almost forgotten the shame and sorrow that day had caused her twenty-one years before; but now it came back to her with full force. With many sighs and tears she celebrated the birth of her only son. As for the son, he cursed the day bitterly in his heart whenever he thought of it; and aroused the curiosity of his roommates by marking a black cross opposite to the date, on the little calendar that hung over his bed.

It was the holiday season in New Manchester. The stores, that evening, were a blaze of light, and the windows full of beautiful things, for the rich to buy and the poor to look at. Not much of a holiday for the weary saleswomen, on foot from eight in the morning till eleven at night. Too much of a holiday season for seven thousand or more men and women;

since half the furnaces of Iron City had been shut down, and half the factories of New Manchester and Locustown were running half-time ; and the winter had set in hard and early.

In front of a show window on Turnpike Avenue, a group of ragged children were gathered, jumping and stamping their feet to keep themselves warm. They were the only lookers-on, for it was late,—near the closing hour. Within, a few late purchasers lingered. Suddenly two women joined the group outside. One addressed the other in French. Attracted by the unfamiliar sound, the children turned their red noses and wide-open eyes towards the speaker. Had anyone translated the conversation for their benefit it would have run as follows :

“ Yes, he is there.”

“ Am I right, do you think ? ”

“ Without doubt.—She is pretty.”

“ Bah ! She is only an American type. Thin as a broomstick, and without character. She will fade in ten years, mark my words.”

“ Very good, and meantime I maintain she is pretty.”

“ Well, it is agreed then that she is pretty. And —next— ? ”

“ I am at a loss to answer. What do you propose ? ”

“ I am, like you, at a loss.”

The subjects of this conversation, meanwhile unconscious of the interest they were exciting, continued a conversation of their own. One of the two was Mrs. Smith’s niece, Frances. The other was Nomanson.

“How soon will you be able to leave?” inquired the latter.

“In a few minutes now. Oh! dear! If Christmas was only over. It’s the first year I’ve ever wished that. We used to have lots of fun, when mamma was alive. Oh! we had *such* fun last Christmas. How I wish I was stronger. This is the easiest work I can find, but it seems to tire me dreadfully.”

“It is hard, this time of year,” said the young man, pityingly, looking down on the fragile girl leaning wearily against the tier of drawers behind her. “It won’t last much longer though, that’s one good thing.”

“Yes,” she answered with a sigh, “there’s comfort in that. And I don’t doubt you’ll be glad, too. It must be a dreadful trouble to you to come here after me, every night. I don’t see how Aunt Susan ever had the face to ask you. I’d never have dared to.”

“Your aunt is certainly a woman of great courage.”

“I don’t know about that, but one thing I do know, that I’m a great coward. If you only knew with what fear and trembling I used to walk home at night. The worst part was after crossing the bridge. It was so lonely over in Locustown. But the night that dreadful wretch followed me and spoke to me— Oh!” she stopped short, and shivered.

“Your aunt said you fainted dead away when you got into the house.”

The girl nodded. “I did; I tried not to, indeed

I did. But, somehow, I couldn't help it. And next morning, when I woke up, I dreaded the night so. And when Aunt Susan told me that you were coming for me that night, oh ! I was so happy."

She looked up at him and smiled, and the dark face above lightened in return.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed one of the women outside, "look at him. I never saw that before. How it changes him ! There, it is gone. Oh ! but he looked handsome then—yes, like an angel."

"Yes. It was wonderful."

"If you had doubted before, could you doubt now ?"

"There can be no doubt."

"If she wins him he is lost to the cause."

"Undoubtedly. It is not of such stuff as she is that the helpmates of Anarchists are made. She has a religion, is it not so ?"

"She goes to some church on Sunday. I have seen her."

"It is as I supposed. All these American women have some superstition. Is it not a wonder, my dear, that these American men ever won what freedom they have,—with such wives and mothers ?"

"It is hard to understand. He must be saved from this folly. He is too valuable to us to be allowed to become a commonplace laborer, with no thought beyond feeding a wife and children. Elise, do you know that the wives and children of the workmen are the foundation of the tyrant's power ?"

"It is true ; I believe it."

"Yes, the yoke would have been thrown off long

ago, had not the men feared that in falling it would crush the lives that are dearer to them than their own. Yes, these wives and children are a weight around the neck of the nation, but, by heaven, it is a beautiful sentiment—this family love. Have you ever regretted, Élise, that you are a devotee of the cause, and can know none of those softer pleasures, those sweet and gentle joys that other women possess?"

"Regret? I cannot tell. I have longed for what you speak of—yes, often. But I have chosen my course. I cannot go back."

"You are right. But see, the store is closing. The girl is leaving him to get her wraps. Come. We have seen enough for our purpose. Let us be going."

The children stayed until the last light had been extinguished, and as Nomanson and Frances passed out the latter stopped and spoke to one of them; a girl of twelve, the biggest of the party. "Why don't you go home, my little girl. Do you know what time it is? It's nearly eleven."

The child had a gentle face, or Frances would not have ventured to speak to her. The tears came in her eyes as she answered.

"Yes, ma'am, I know it's late, but we daresen't go home."

"Why not?"

"'Cause father's been on a drunk this week, and he punched mamma in the eye yesterday, and kicked Charlie, and we've got to stay out till he's asleep, and then mamma'll come for us."

"Oh! you poor little things. Dear me, what *is* to be done? What can we do, Mr. Nomanson?"

"I don't see that anything is to be done, except find them a night's lodging."

"But—but that would take money."

"Which makes it out of the question for either of us," said Nomanson, with a sad smile.

"Yes," she assented with a sigh, "but I do so hate to leave the poor little things shivering here, while I go home to a warm room. That is—the room isn't so *very* warm, but I have plenty of bed-clothes; and after I've been in bed awhile, it's nice and warm. But, oh! isn't it awful when you first get in. And, my, when you get up in the morning."

Hearing the jingling of bells and clatter of horses' hoofs he proposed that they should take the approaching car.

"Oh, no. It's so much pleasanter, walking."

"But you said you were tired."

"I was, but this air is so bracing, that now I feel as if I could walk forever. Come on."

But she leaned on him heavily, before long, and her feet moved more and more slowly. So, in spite of her protests, he stopped the next car.

Meantime, the two women who had been looking in at the show window, had crossed over to Locustown, and were rattling along towards Iron City on one of the cars of the River Line. One of them struck the palm of her left hand with her right fist so violently that the attention of the only passenger in the car besides themselves was attracted by the gesture.

"My dear," she exclaimed, "there is but one thing to be done."

"In regard to our young friend? I have been thinking of him too."

"There is but one thing to be done. What is the hardest of all substances?"

"The diamond."

"But the diamond can be cut with diamond dust, and we must make diamond cut diamond."

"And how?"

"He must love one of us."

The cheek of the younger grew red and faded again.

"Which of us?" she asked.

"I leave that to you."

"Bah! I cannot say. Suppose we leave it to him?"

"What! Shall we two be rivals for his favor? That would be dignified, indeed!"

The younger shrugged her shoulders.

"Come," the elder went on, "I will give you a better plan."

"And that is—?"

"A game of écarté."

"If he knew what you propose, he would not love you," she answered, laughing softly.

"Probably not; men are so vain, and this one is probably no exception. But you know as well as I that they are wax in the hands of woman, if she knows how to mould them."

About the time that Nomanson was getting to bed, his two would-be saviors from the toils of his

landlady's niece were beginning the game on which his fate depended. He was in a profound slumber before it was finished.

Meanwhile, Frances had gone to her frosty attic, and shivering, had completed her preparations for the night. In spite of the cold, she stood, for a while, regarding herself in the cracked looking-glass.

"Yes,"—when she had completed her inspection,—
"I am, rather—"

Then, with a sudden blush, she put out the lamp, and scrambled into bed.

Tired as she was, she lay awake for some time, listening to the snores of Susan the cook, and thinking about the moody, silent man who had been constituted her protector. At last her thoughts grew indistinct, and she slept.

Far off in Iron City, two women were still playing their game of *écarté*. It was nearly ended by that time. Frances was in the midst of her first dream,—striving to measure tape with a gold-handled parasol—when Vera threw down her cards with an exclamation of disgust.

"Bah! the devil could not play against such luck as yours, Élise."

"There, there, my child, be calm. Allow me to offer you a cigarette—or better still, a glass of beer. It is my turn to go for it, I believe. Pray give me my cloak—you are sitting on it."

"Take it, and my blessing with it. But if I had only held the ace of diamonds in the third hand you would never have won the game."

"Ah! my child, don't be too sure. I played

écarté with my grandfather before you were born," and she flung her cloak around her.

"Well, perhaps you may play it with your grandson after I am dead," said Vera. "If you do, I hope you will have as good luck as you had to-night."

Elise took a majolica pitcher from the closet. She held it up to the light and examined it. The design consisted of green frogs and bullrushes on a white ground.

"I bought it," said Vera, in explanation. "I broke the other one, yesterday. Do you like it?"

"Hideous!"

"Why, my dear! That is what these Americans call a 'symphony in green and white.' But that was not my reason for choosing it. I thought that it would be such an appropriate design for our milk pitcher. And then, too, I thought it would remind you of beautiful France."

Elise laughed good-humoredly, and went out.

When she returned Vera was lying on the sofa, smoking a cigarette. She filled the glasses, and proposed "the health of our young man."

"Tell me, my dear," Vera asked, as they set down their glasses, "now that you have won him, how do you propose to fascinate him?"

"Bah! In the usual way. How should I?"

"What is the usual way?"

"Are you a woman and ask that? You are very young, my little one, but you need not try to persuade me that you are so very innocent. You know how to make a fool of any man, I dare wager."

"Well, may be so. But tell me *your* way. There must be more ways than one."

"Parbleu! the woman who uses one only is a simpleton. I shall use all."

"What do you consider the most important?"

"Dress."

"Good. You are wise. Next?"

"Flattery."

"Magnificent. I see you have the science by heart. Really, I doubt if anything more is needed."

"Convenient, but scarcely necessary."

"Ha! Ha! I don't know whether you see the humor of this situation as I do, *Elise*, but it is most supremely absurd?"

"My dear, I am in veritable earnest. I consider it a most serious and disagreeable duty. It will interfere with my convenience abominably, but it must be done, and the cards have said that I must do it."

"Generous, unselfish, *Elise*! Do have another glass of beer."

CHAPTER XVII.

LUCY Locus sat in a great armchair, before the fire in her drawing-room, wrapped in a heavy shawl, for the day was cold, and she was not one of the warm-blooded sort. On her left sat a china bulldog, and on her right a live pug. She liked china dogs better than living ones, but fashion demanded that she should keep some kind of a live dog, and she considered a pug the least objectionable.

The pug never quite comprehended the footing on which he stood with his mistress, and sometimes made a nuisance of himself by demonstrations of affection. Seeing the young lady's white hand hanging invitingly over the arm of the chair,—she was in a half doze,—he put his cold blunt nose against it, and licked it.

“You nasty creature!” she exclaimed. “I was just getting comfortable, and now I shall have to go and wash my hands. I don’t see what dogs were made for!”

The pug blinked, and watched her as she moved towards the door. He was greatly to be pitied. Nobody in the house liked dogs. In his loneliness he had even tried to make friends with the cat and had been repulsed. But he was faithful. Hearing a strange step on the piazza, he suddenly started to his feet and waddled after her, uttering a series of snorting barks.

Just as Miss Locus reached the hall, the door bell rang. Her heart beat faster as she ran up-stairs, leaving the pug barking in the hall. A servant brought up a card.

"Colonel Sancroft," she said, discontentedly. "Tell him I'm out. No, say I'm in—even *he* is better than being alone all day."

So she went down to meet the gallant old officer, and smilingly received his usual compliments. When these had been exhausted, the Colonel remarked that he had just come from the church.

"Charming decorations this year, my dear young lady; more tasteful than ever, upon my honor."

"I suppose Mr. Brayton is superintending the work, as usual," said Lucy, languidly.

"I presume so; he was there, and so was Miss Vandeleur and Miss Laford. Young Mr. Laford, also, and Miss Eversley, but they didn't appear to be working very hard."

Lucy became interested at once. "What were they doing?" she inquired.

"Mr. Laford was lying in a pew, very comfortably propped up with cushions, and Miss Eversley was trying to make him laugh, by tickling his face with a sprig of hemlock."

The Colonel's face was turned towards the fire, but out of the corner of his eye he saw that she changed color and frowned a little.

"I don't think people have any business to behave that way in church," she exclaimed angrily. "It *is* a church, even if there's no service going on, and they ought to remember that."

“Quite right, my dear young lady, quite right; so I thought. But then, you see, they are both very young—very young, indeed. You can hardly expect people of that age to take life seriously.”

“I do expect people of that age to have common decency. I wonder Lillian didn’t speak to them.”

With a bland smile the Colonel changed the subject, but inwardly he was fuming.

* * * * *

“That infernal puppy,” he muttered, as he walked down the avenue, twenty minutes later. “No use in speaking until he becomes engaged to that Eversley girl. I wish Briarly would come back. He might be played against him. He’s over head and ears in love with her, that’s certain. But this thing will have to be managed cautiously, very cautiously. A false move, and I’m mated—no, the other way. Not bad that, for a pun! I must work it in, the next place I go to.”

Meanwhile, Miss Locus reseated herself before the fire, but she could not rest. At last she rang the bell and ordered her carriage.

“If my aunt comes in,” she said to the footman, “say I have gone to the church to help with the dressing.”

It was nearly dark when Lucy arrived at the church, and the lights were shining dimly through the stained glass windows. When she entered the dressing was nearly completed. She looked for Victor and Violet, who were in a corner, near the chancel. Victor was sitting on a hassock at Violet’s feet, watch-

ing her as she tied bunches of hemlock to a piece of clothesline. Most of the gentlemen were emulating him in watching the ladies work. Mr. Brayton, a little man with fiery whiskers and a sonorous voice, was directing the movements of two who formed an exception. One of these was at the top of a ladder and the other at the foot, engaged in festooning the church with the ropes of evergreens.

“More that way, more that way!” he shouted. “That’s about it. Now drive your nail, and look out for the plaster. Mr. Stylish will give us fits if you fetch any of it down. Look out there, you’re against a lath; you’ll have the whole business down in a minute. Put it up a little higher. That’s right. Now try it. It’s all right now, isn’t it?”

His voice ceased, and through the hemlock-scented air came Violet’s laugh. Her laugh was not the best part of her, as “Cousin George” had once remarked. “Exactly like a servant-girl,” said Miss Locus to herself, and she felt, somehow, that she had not come in vain.

She walked along the holly-and-hemlock-strewn aisle to the place where Lillian stood. A rope was stretched over the backs of the pews in front of her, and she was tying rapidly, intent on her work. Two little Sunday-school girls were bunching for her. Not far off were two other ladies, who had just met in the middle of a long rope. One of them had stopped work; the other, who was putting on some finishing touches, was Miss Vandeleur, a sallow young lady, with a fine alto voice. The former was Mrs. Tarbox, a little pale woman with thin, tightly-closed lips. She

was the relict of a clergyman, R. Tatham Tarbox, a well-known writer of low-church newspaper articles. As Lucy came up Miss Vandeleur was speaking.

“The last—yes, positively the last time I shall sing in this choir,” she was saying. “I am willing to give my time and to give my talent, but I do expect some slight appreciation. When it comes to singing myself hoarse for two years, without receiving one word of appreciation, that is just a *little* more than I can put up with. If I don’t sing well enough to suit the people, then I had better make way for some one who will suit—and I’m sure I’m quite willing—quite willing, Mrs. Tarbox.”

“Well,” replied the lady addressed, “there is one thing certain, and that is that *I* am not going to attend to the Christmas tree another year. Some one else has got to do *that*. Positively, I have run about this town, buying presents, until I am just ready to drop. You’ll hardly believe it, but actually they wanted me to attend to fixing the tree, too! But there I put my foot down. I said I’d buy the presents, but some one else must attend to the tree. So Mary Atherton said she would, and I consented to go on the tree committee on those terms.”

“Dear me!” said Lucy, who had come in time to hear these last remarks, “if both of you are going to back out, I don’t see what’s to be done next year. Mr. Brayton told me last Sunday, that *he* wouldn’t superintend dressing the church another year.”

Lillian looked up from her work with an amused expression on her face.

"Sufficient for the *year* is the evil thereof. Have you heard from your sister since she went to Chicago, Mrs. Tarbox?"

"Yes, and she tells me that the new minister who's coming to that church over in Locustown is one of the rankest ritualists in America. He's had to leave three parishes already, twice for getting into trouble with the Bishop, and once because the people couldn't stand him. His name is Blair."

"They say he's a fine preacher," said Miss Vandeleur. "I shall have to go over and hear him."

"Oh! yes, there's no doubt he's a good preacher, in a sensational way. Why, last Good Friday, they say half the women in the congregation were crying."

"When is he coming?" asked Lucy.

"Next month, I believe."

"They say Mrs. Robinson is a good deal of a ritualist. Perhaps she'll go over the river to church now," said Lucy.

"And a very good thing if she would."

"I don't like her very much, myself," said Miss Vandeleur.

"I won't say that I dislike her. I don't want to be uncharitable, but that woman has made more trouble since she has been in this church than any one else in the congregation. She is always finding fault with something, and never speaks well of anybody."

"If she goes, I think Jennie Edmonds will go too," said Miss Vandeleur.

"Another very desirable departure, my dear.

Upon my word, the goings on of that girl with that young Raymond are simply disgusting."

"I think it's more her fault than his, don't you think so?"

"Most assuredly."

"To tell you the truth, I think he fancies Susie Thompson."

"I rather think so. Well, I'm going home. Are you going to stay any longer?"

"No. I'll walk as far as our house with you. Dear me, did you see what became of my other glove?"

When the two ladies were outside, Miss Vandeleur inquired, "What do you suppose brought Lucy Locus to the church?"

"Why Victor Laford, of course; only she was too late. Violet had captured him. I really pitied the poor girl, she looked so disconsolate. I tell you, my dear, it was different when I was a girl. We didn't run after the young men in those days; we let them come after us. They always will, and they respect you a great deal more."

Miss Vandeleur turned away her head to conceal a smile. There was a rumor current in the upper circles that the late Mr. Tarbox had been hunted from New York to Buffalo, and from Buffalo to Cincinnati, and finally run down in Chicago.

"It's curious," she said presently, "that Lillian Laford doesn't seem to take with the men. She really is good-looking, her manners are ladylike, and she is certainly well-off; and yet she never seems to have any attraction for the other sex."

"Too cold and stiff; that's what's the matter. No life, no animation; a mere icicle. Men want something lively, they don't care so much for mere good looks as people think. A lively girl that can talk and make things cheerful—that's what they like."

"I suppose that's why they all like Violet Eversley. Really, did you ever know a girl with so few accomplishments?"

"If her aunt had only taken my advice and sent both the girls to a good church school, they'd have learned something; but she would send them to Madame Dufrey's. Girls learn nothing but nonsense at those fashionable boarding schools—you may be thankful if they learn nothing worse."

While these two ladies continued on their way homeward, Lucy was helping Lillian to finish her rope of evergreens. Miss Locus worked slowly, and what she did was not very creditable. Her attention was wandering to the corner where Violet and Victor sat. Once, just after Victor had spoken, they both looked towards her and laughed. She felt the color rush into her face, and her hands trembled so that she could hardly tie the bunches of hemlock to the rope.

For a miserable half hour she had to endure the tête-à-tête. Relief came at last when a footman in fur tippet and squeaking boots, went up the isle to Victor, and then came to Lillian.

"If you please, miss," he said, "I was sent to tell you that Mr. George has come. He is at the house now."

“ Oh ! has he ? Well, we’ll all go home, then. Is the carriage here ? ”

“ Yes, miss.”

Victor was helping Violet to put on her velvet jacket, and as they came down the isle, Violet kissed Lucy effusively.

“ Oh ! won’t you come home and take dinner with us ? ” she said. “ Cousin George has come to spend Christmas ; he’s real nice—you’ve never met him, have you ? We are going to have lots of fun this evening.”

Lucy declined, though Victor seconded the invitation. She was sorry afterwards, but she was in a “contrary” mood just then.

At the Laford house cousin George was found in the library, with the evening paper. He was a big-nosed, hatchet-faced youth, full of energy and fond of action. As soon as the usual greetings had been exchanged, he proposed a game of billiards which occupied them until it was time for them to dress for dinner. After dinner Mrs. Laford inquired if the carriage was ready.

“ Hallo ! ” exclaimed George. “ You’re not going out on such a night as this ? You’ll be half frozen.”

“ I must risk that. I hope you won’t think me rude, for going out the first evening of your visit, but your cousins will do their best to entertain you. I always make it a practice to spend Christmas eve in visiting some poor people. And I am afraid you will have to excuse Lillian too. They have the Sunday-school celebration to-night, and she is one of the teachers. But these two have nothing whatever

to do except to make themselves agreeable, and Vi doesn't mind smoke, so you can take her into the smoking room if you like."

"Let's go with aunt," exclaimed Violet, rising. "Come on cousin George what do you say? I've never been slumming in my life, and you know it's all the fashion. Aunt goes to all kinds of dreadful places, and it will be splendid fun."

George was always ready for any proposition to go somewhere, especially if Violet was to be his companion. Victor remained, languidly cracking walnuts, and the party started without him.

It was a calm, clear night, and the stars were shining brightly, but it was intensely cold. George had taken the precaution to swallow a glass of brandy and wished he had taken two. The very crunch of the gravel under the wheels and the ring of the horses' hoofs sounded cold.

George and Violet kept talking but the other two said very little. Lillian was left at the church. Soon the jolting of the carriage showed that the smooth macadam of St. Joseph's Place had been exchanged for the stones of a paved street.

When they stopped George looked out and saw a row of small mean houses. The footman's ring at one of the doors was answered by a tall woman, with a lean and wrinkled face, with a lamp in her hand.

"The poor old thing has been expecting me," said Mrs. Laford, with a smile, as she stepped from the carriage.

The old woman lighted them into the house, and throwing her arms around Mrs. Laford, kissed her.

“You dear precious child,” she said, in a quavering voice. Then, to the other two: “I used to be her nurse, forty years ago.”

“Oh! Martha, how dreadful of you to betray me like that. Until now, I am sure, Mr. Rathbone never imagined that I was over thirty, did you George?”

“Well, I must say, Aunt Bess, that I had my suspicions.”

“You ought to be ashamed to acknowledge it.”

The old woman, meanwhile, had opened the door of another room, and invited them to enter. It was plainly furnished, but very neat. There was a stove, on which a tea-kettle was singing, and on a table a basket of cake, and some cups and saucers.

The visitors seated themselves and the old woman, beaming with smiles, served them. Greatly to her disappointment George declined, but the two ladies drank the tea and nibbled some of the cake. Having made her guests as comfortable as she could, the old woman sat down and crossed her hands in her lap.

“How well you’re looking, Miss Bessie,” she said, looking at Mrs. Laford over her spectacles. “And how are the dear children? I haven’t seen them in a long while; and your husband, I hope he is well.”

“They are all well, thank you. Miss Lillian would have come to see you to-night, but they needed her at the church.”

“What a good young lady she is, just like you, my dear, at her age. Would you believe it, Miss,”

turning to Violet, "I never knew your aunty to do but one piece of mischief when she was a little girl. I'd been making raspberry wine, and she thought she would, too; so she went out in the garden, and picked a lot of raspberries, and squeezed them in her new white muslin dress for a strainer. You ought to have seen her when she came in."

"My, what a good girl you must have been Aunt. I'm sure my nurse would never be able to say that of me. I was a dreadfully naughty child—a regular little terror."

"How wonderfully you've gotten over it," remarked George.

"Just listen to the impertinence of the creature! I never was half as naughty as you. If you say much more, I'll tell about your tying that tin can to Carlo's tail."

"I'll swear it was Jimmie Reeves did that."

"No, you won't get out of it that way, because I was looking out of the window and saw you."

"Well, all I did was to hold the dog; anyway Jimmie did the tying."

"That was just as bad, wasn't it, Aunt?"

"Just as bad. And now, Martha, I've brought you a little present. I thought, this year, you would like a black silk dress, so I've got it here."

Martha received the gift with sparkling eyes, and a series of ejaculations of gratitude. When it had been sufficiently admired, the conversation drifted to old times, while George and Violet, seated on a sofa, appeared absorbed with each other until their departure.

Their next call was at a wretched hovel on an unpaved and rain-guttered street. The footman's knock was answered by the hoarse barking of a dog. A rough voice quieted him, and the door was opened. A woman bade them good evening and invited them in.

She was big and brawny, and her gray hair hung dishevelled around a hard face. Her dress was black and ragged, and a dilapidated red shawl hung about her shoulders. The dog, a nondescript cur, sniffed, but did not dare to bark.

"How is your daughter to-night?" inquired Mrs. Laford.

"A little better, ma'am; but she can't last much longer. Sit down and make yourself at home, ma'am, while I go and get her ready to see you."

There was no hall in the hovel, the door opening into a kitchen and sitting-room combined. The woman disappeared behind a flimsy partition at the rear.

"I should think you'd be afraid to come into such places, Aunt," whispered George.

"O! no, the people are clean enough, and there is no contagious disease in the house."

"I wasn't thinking of that; are there any men around?"

"They are harmless enough. I suppose they are now celebrating Christmas eve by getting drunk, so we're not likely to see them."

Presently the woman returned and invited them into the next room. There, propped up in bed, was a girl of twenty or thereabouts. Her face was ema-

ciated, and, as she held out her hand to Mrs. Laford, she seemed almost too weak to lift it. Her hair was very luxuriant, and it had been elaborately arranged for the occasion. Around her neck was a string of yellow beads, and her red cloth jacket was trimmed with tarnished gold braid.

“How are you feeling to-night, my dear?” inquired Mrs. Laford, as she seated herself by the bedside.

“Oh! better, thank you, ma’am, much better. I hope to be up next week. It’s this cold weather that makes my cold so much worse. I hope to be back at work before spring.”

“I am glad you feel better.”

“I really do, ma’am. What a lovely dress that is that you have on, Miss Eversley. Now I hope you won’t think I’m impertinent, but would you mind telling me how much it cost?”

The girl rattled on in this way, interrupted by occasional fits of coughing, for twenty minutes. Then when the footman had brought in a basket of good things, the party returned to the carriage.

“You can’t think how pleased that poor girl will be to tell all her acquaintances about our calling on her,” said Mrs. Laford, “and the gorgeous peignoir that I left for her will fill her with ecstasy; I didn’t dare to let her see it to-night, for fear of exciting her too much. I only hope she may rally a little, and be able to get out of bed and wear it once or twice, before the end comes. There! Violet, I forgot to leave our cards. If the poor child could have seen them stuck in the frame of her looking-glass her happiness

would have been complete. But I'll send some around with inquiries, in a day or two."

It was about half-past nine when the carriage rumbled across the South bridge to Iron City. Most of the people had been driven from the streets by the intense cold, but when the carriage stopped a dozen curious idlers gathered on the sidewalk. They uttered low exclamations of wonder, when they saw the ladies in seal skin and diamonds, descend and enter the dark and narrow doorway of a tenement-house. George went with them, and the footman followed, leaving the coachman unpleasantly conscious of being the observed of a constantly increasing number of observers.

The party felt their way up the narrow stairs, Mrs. Laford leading, to the end of the hall on the fourth floor, where she rapped at a door. A childish voice said, "Come in."

The apartment was almost bare, a stove in one corner, and a bed in another, on which, under a ragged quilt, lay four children,—one of them a mere baby—the eldest a girl of twelve. There was no fire and the room was intensely cold. A kerosene lamp gave out a strong odor, but a very feeble light.

When the door opened, the eldest child got out of bed, fully dressed, even to her shoes.

"Oh! it's you, ma'am; I thought it was some of the people in the house, or I'd have opened the door for you, ma'am. Won't you sit down, ma'am? Not that chair, ma'am, 'cause it's pretty rickety. I hope you'll excuse our not having no fire, but I'm afraid you'll be pretty cold. I lighted the lamp 'cause I

thought it might warm the room, but we didn't have much oil, and I'm afraid it's going out. Get up, you children, and say 'how do' to the ladies."

"But, child, what has become of the coal I sent you only last week?"

"Mamma sold it, ma'am."

As the child said this, she hung her head, and colored.

"Sold it!"

"Yes, ma'am."

"But what did she do that for?"

"I—I guess, 'cause she—she wanted whiskey."

"Horrible!"

After a pause, Mrs. Laford continued:

"Where is your mother, now?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Do you know when she will be home?"

"No, ma'am."

Mrs. Laford sat buried in thought for half a minute, then took out her pocketbook.

"Here is some money," she said. "Go and buy some coal at once. Have the children had any supper?"

"No, ma'am; nor dinner nor breakfast, neither."

"Get something for them to eat. Charles will go with you and carry the coal."

"Oh! thank you, ma'am; don't trouble the gentleman. I'll get Benny Tompkins, on the next floor. He'll carry it for me. Thank you ever so much, ma'am."

As she said the last words she ran out of the door,

and they heard her feet clattering down the dark stairway.

The other children had left the bed and come close to Mrs. Laford. She began to rummage in her basket, and produced a shawl and two thick cloaks, in which she wrapped them. They gazed at her with dumb, dog-like gratitude, but said nothing.

“Isn’t this too dreadful for anything?” said Mrs. Laford to her companions. “When once they take to selling things there’s no telling what they won’t do. I expect she’ll sell these very clothes off their backs. As for her, I have brought her some warm clothes, but, really, I don’t see any use in giving them to her.”

“No,” said George, “you can’t do anything with these people. The only way is to let them alone.”

“I can’t do that. The mother of these children was in my Sunday-school class, years ago. I believe I’m the only friend she has in the world, and I can’t help hoping that I may reclaim her. Such a pity. She was one of the brightest, pleasantest girls I ever knew.”

“When drink once gets hold of a man he’s generally a gone case, and it’s worse with a woman. You had better bestow your charity on a more worthy object, Aunt.”

“Yes, Aunt Bessie, I really think George is right,” said Violet. “You only make things worse by trying to help such people.”

“Oh, you wise young heads! if older people would only take your advice, how much better the world would be!”

"Well, of course, I know I don't know much about it," said George. "But I don't believe in making paupers of people. I think that most of the charity you see is very demoralizing. I believe that the best way for a man to be charitable is to spend plenty of money in furnishing employment for people."

A heavy step was heard on the stair. The knob was violently turned and the door was flung open by a woman. She was supporting herself with one hand and shading her eyes with the other. When she discovered Mrs. Laford she said, in a thick, hoarse voice:

"What are you here for? This ain't no fit place for a lady to come to."

"It is fortunate I came, Mamie, or your children might have frozen to death."

"Oh, I know what I am; you needn't tell me. You can't think worse of me than I think of myself. But where's the use of coming here? Why can't you let me go to the devil in my own way?"

"I won't argue that point with you in your present condition."

"Well," said the woman, seating herself on the bed, "I hope you will all make yourselves comfortable. I'm all right. Yes, ma'am, that coal you sent me is warming me now, though not in the way you meant. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I see that I can do nothing with you in your present state. I shall stay here until I have seen your children warmed and fed. Then I shall go."

"I hope you won't hurry yourself, ma'am. And, while you're waiting, may be you'll allow me to offer

you some of that coal you so kindly sent. It will make you just as warm as if it was in the stove, ma'am. Ha! ha! ha! Jennie, get them two tumblers out of the closet. I shall have to ask you to wait till after the ladies, sir, seeing we only have two glasses. We wouldn't have them, only they was cracked and Hausrath wouldn't count 'em as part of the set, so I brought 'em back."

The woman threw herself back on the bed and laughed loudly. Then, when the child had brought the glasses, she lifted herself up, took a flat bottle from her pocket, poured out two liberal drams, and walked unsteadily to Mrs. Laford.

"I hope ladies, you'll excuse the glasses being cracked. Allow me, ma'am. You'd better put the water in for yourself. Jennie, get the pitcher of water for the lady—that is if it ain't turned to ice."

Mrs. Laford took the glasses from her, and placed them on the table.

"You are forgetting yourself," she said, sternly.

"Forget myself?" exclaimed the woman, staring wildly around. "Forget myself," she repeated, in a lower tone. "Oh! my God, if I only could! But I can't, I can't, I can't."

She threw herself on the bed, buried her face in the pillow, and began to sob bitterly, with broken ejaculations.

After a while, her maudlin grief was interrupted by the entrance of her eldest daughter, with several packages, a basket full of coal, and a ragged boy. The latter stayed long enough for a long open-mouthed stare at the fine ladies and gentleman. The

girl was surrounded by the hungry-eyed children while she opened a package. She distributed doughnuts and then set to work at the fire.

When the fire was burning brightly, and the children hovering around it munching doughnuts, Mrs. Laford rose.

"I shall come to see you again, Mamie, day after to-morrow, when I hope to find you sober. But I believe you have sense enough now to understand one thing: If you abuse these children any more I will have them taken away from you. I mean what I say."

The woman gave her a look of dull resentment, and muttered something about interfering in other people's affairs. The eldest girl followed them with the lamp to the head of the stairs.

"Good evening, ma'am," she said. "Good evening ma'am. Good evening, sir. I hope you'll come again soon. This is one of mamma's bad nights when she ain't herself, but I hope you'll excuse her. I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year."

On the sidewalk, the crowd around the carriage had increased. On the outskirts stood Rothmann and Ardetti.

"That," said Rothmann, as the ladies came out of the house, "is a woman who does much harm to the 'Cause.'"

* * * * *

"Well, George," inquired Violet, when they had ridden a short distance, "have you found it amusing, so far?"

“Rather, but I don’t think I’d care to do it every night.”

“I think it’s real fun. That poor old woman that we saw first was quite pathetic. And that poor dying girl—Oh! that made me feel real sad. I just felt like crying. But that drunken creature—wasn’t she too much? When she went up to Aunt Bessie with that glass of whiskey I thought I should burst. I didn’t want to encourage her impudence by laughing at her, and yet it seemed as if I must laugh or die.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE Volks Garten was a favorite resort of Nomanson's as he could there enjoy an evening of warmth, light and music for the modest sum of five cents, and it was a place where he met many acquaintances among the workingmen.

The building contained a great hall with a gallery around three sides and a platform for the orchestra on the fourth. The floor was well filled with wooden tables and chairs, and the walls adorned with roughly-executed frescoes. From the ceiling hung an electric light.

With an untasted glass of beer before him, Nomanson sat in a state of drowsy contentment, listening to the music.

In front of him he recognized a member of his own Trades Union. He was a great beer drinker and a great talker; and had been indulging freely during the evening.

Looking towards Nomanson he remarked: "There are two of your Dutch friends, coming this way."

Elise and Vera came and seated themselves one on each side of him.

Elise had so changed her appearance that he scarcely recognized her, and betrayed his surprise, which she acknowledged with a smile.

Like a knight who throws off his robes of peace, and, clad in gorgeous mail and fully armed, rides

forth in quest of combat; Élise had discarded her former simplicity of attire, and now appeared in all the allurements of her sex.

Her dress, of elaborate design and fine material, showed off to perfection that faultlessness of figure that Art can accomplish, even where Nature is unkind. A soft fringe of ringlets half concealed her forehead, and her usually pale face was tinged with a delicate color, enhanced by a black hat with drooping plumes.

Nomanson was not without his small extravagances, and, feeling that the usages of the place demanded it, he called for beer; Vera, meanwhile without a formal introduction, was making herself agreeable to Nomanson's companion; while Élise devoted her attention to the man whose affections she had already won—at cards.

As she leaned over and chatted, smiling, he noticed a delicate perfume. Could it be that this gracious and fragrant being was the stern and fanatical Élise Larose—the woman who had unsexed herself in the fiery pursuit of an abstract idea? Could that soft, low voice that he now listened to be the same he had so often heard, hard, clear, and metallic, cleaving its way through a storm of confused debate?

He felt annoyed by the change. One of the pillars of the "Cause" seemed to be crumbling. Suppose all these Anarchists should turn into ordinary men and women? He set his teeth hard at the thought, and cursed the weakness of human nature.

Élise observed his scowl and stopped talking, and leaning forward, laid her hand on his arm.

“ You are troubled, my friend ; I have long known that you had some secret sorrow. Some day I will ask you to tell me what it is, but not here. Bah ! I am weary of the smoke and noise already. We are neither of us in the humor for this place to-night. Let us go into the fresh air.”

Nomanson followed her reluctantly.

When they had reached a quiet place she drew closer to him.

“ Tell me ; what is it that troubles you ? Be sure, I am your friend.”

“ Pshaw !” impatiently. “ I have my own troubles like other men, but I don’t talk about them.”

“ Have you never longed for sympathy ? Most men have some woman to whom they tell all. Is it not so with you ?”

“ No.”

“ And yet I know one who adores you ; and she is so sweet and gentle that I wonder how any man can refuse her love.”

He looked her sternly in the face.

“ Don’t be angry with me for speaking of her,” she said, looking up and smiling. “ She is so nice that I love her myself. I love everything that is pretty and harmless and loving. You are surprised, but I am not a savage. I hate the oppressors of the poor, and when I speak of them I feel like a tigress. Tell me, do you not think she is pretty ?”

“ I don’t know who you are talking about.”

“ Ah ! you would have me believe that ?”

“ Not unless you want to. I don’t care.”

“That is well. I don’t believe you; no, not at all. She has told you that she loves you in every way but in words, and you cannot be so ignorant as you pretend.”

“What is the name of this nice little girl? I know quite a number that would answer your description.”

“Bah! You make me tired. Come, let us talk of something else.”

“Agreed; talk of anything you please.”

“Do you like flowers, and children?”

“I can’t say that I do, but may be I could learn.”

“You shall. Come with me to-night and you shall see my birds. Ah! but they are darlings. They will be asleep when we get home, but they will wake when I light the lamp, they will be so glad to see me. They are as yellow as the butter one sees in Normandy. They love each other, those birds, better than husband and wife. And they are smart. They know what I say to them every time. I will tell the male to sing for you, and he will, unless he is naughty.”

Nomanson listened with no apparent interest.

“When the warm weather comes,” she continued, “I will have some flowers. I had many last summer. There are boxes on each window sill, and I will put fresh earth in them, and there will be flowers all summer long. First the roses, red, white and yellow; and then the fuschias. You shall have a buttonhole bouquet every day if you are good.”

Nomanson registered a mental vow not to be good, for he hated buttonhole bouquets.

"Yes," she went on, "flowers and birds are nice pets, but children are the best. I never see a woman with a baby, no matter how poor she may be, but I envy her."

She felt the muscles of his arm grow rigid. She was evidently treading on dangerous ground, but knew not where the danger lay. At first, she was tempted to find out, but presently chose the safer course of retreat.

She changed the subject abruptly.

"Tell me," she said, "are you then above all the human weaknesses? Do you love no one, fear no one; can you do nothing but hate?"

This question kindled his interest.

"I suppose," he said after a pause, "that all men fear something and love something."

"I doubt it. There are some who fear nothing, and I think you are one of them."

"I used to be afraid of the police when I was a boy, anyhow I used to run when they got after me. I was chased once for swimming off a dock. Seems to me, though, now I come to think of it, I wasn't exactly afraid, but I knew if I was caught my mother would cry when she heard of it."

He stopped short and ground his teeth together. She wondered what had infuriated the young savage again so soon. However, feeling sure that she was on the right track, she would not allow herself to be turned aside.

"I was right then; you are trying now to find out what fear is, but you will never know, my young dare-devil; no, never, never."

She gave him a look of admiration, and drew closer to him.

"Ah! if we were all like you there would be action instead of talk, but most of the brethren know what it is to be afraid; and there is but little danger in talk."

"You've hit the nail square on the head. I'm tired of it and sick of it. I hear blood and fire from the platform night after night, and what does it all end in? Smoke—and beer."

She laughed.

"They need the spirit of '92," she said. "It is not dead in Paris yet, though they have tried to kill it often enough. If we could only send over there and get some of it, then we should see." . . .

"Oh! you should have seen what I have seen, when I was a little *pétroleuse*—a wild half-grown thing; bare-footed—with hair like a colt's mane. We set fire to three hundred houses in one day—the day when old Mère Thibaud was killed by a shell. We had no dynamite, or we would have blown up all Paris; as we shall blow up this place, some day."

Nomanson's eyes gleamed. She felt him press her hand against his side. This increased her confidence.

"All we need are a few men of courage—men like you. It is an easy thing to blow the capitalists sky-high—if you dare to do it."

For a moment Nomanson wavered. The hopelessness of waiting for an open rebellion had been growing on him. The thought of sending the Laford works into the air was very fascinating, but he resisted the temptation.

He answered her coldly : " You know that I don't approve of that sort of thing ! "

" Ah ! you are too brave for that. You will have open war. No stratagem ; no ambuscade."

" Not exactly. Ambuscade and stratagem are both fair in war, but the enemy must have notice,—the declaration must be made openly. It is unfair to attack a man in time of peace."

" Those are noble sentiments. You are teaching me what I never thought of before. You are high up ; I must climb before I reach you. * * It is strange what an influence you have ! I had sworn to-night that I would not talk of these things, but I must, when I am with you. Did you know that you were a man of blood and iron ? That is what you are."

She looked at him intently to see the effect of these last words, but she was baffled, as his face betrayed nothing.

But she had found out how to interest him, and there was no difficulty in suggesting subjects of conversation. By the time they reached her door she had made Nomanson feel that there was a bond of union between them such as he had never suspected. A common sympathy in the cause had always existed, but he had never ~~felt~~ how completely they sympathized with each other.

However, greatly to the disappointment of his companion, he could not be induced to go in with her. He had resolved to be in bed before eleven that night ; and he was.

When Vera came in with Ardetti, an hour later,

she found her friend on the sofa, filling the air with cigarette fumes. The open box on the table invited them, and they did likewise. Vera sent the Italian for beer, and then inquired as to her friend's adventures during the evening.

Élise answered first with a puff of smoke, then with an exclamation of disgust.

“Bah! the pig of an American. It is like lifting a hundred tons—he is so stupid and shy. He loves me already, but it will take him a century to find it out, and then he will be afraid to tell me.”

Vera would have given all her worldly wealth to have followed those two invisibly, and have known whether or not the French woman spoke the truth.

CHAPTER XIX.

A sound of suppressed giggling came from the front stairs at Mrs. Smith's boarding house. Miss Simpson and Miss Jennings were leaning over the banisters and reading a letter by the dim chandelier in the hall.

"My! ain't that too much for anything," was the comment made by Miss Jennings. This was the note, clearly written in a bold and well-formed hand.

"Dear Miss Simpson:—

"Perhaps I am presuming in taking the liberty of addressing you, but I hope you will excuse the liberty because I am your sincere well-wisher, tho' our acquaintance is slight. Will you please meet me to-night at the corner of Grand and Sixth Sts. at 8 o'clock sharp because I will be there before 8 so as not to keep you waiting. You need not be afraid, because I am acting honorable as you will see if you come. Please do.

Most respectfully yours,
J. L. BROWN."

"Would you go if you was me?" inquired Lizzie, when her companion had finished reading.

"Gracious! no. Why Lizzie Simpson, what can you be thinking about to ask such a question?"

"Well, I don't know. Of course I wouldn't do it only just for fun."

"Well! It ain't the sort of fun I'd want to have

anything to do with. If he wants to see you why don't he come here and ask for you like a gentlemen?"

"I think I will write and tell him that if he wants to see me, he's got to come here. Of course I couldn't think of meeting him that way, at night."

After dinner, Lizzie announced that she was going to the drug store, and declined her friend's offer to accompany her, saying that she would only be gone a few minutes.

Lizzie did go to the drug store, and made a trifling purchase, but instead of returning to the house immediately she walked on to the corner referred to in her letter and was greeted by Mr. Brown.

She made a pretence of surprise.

The detective winked. "Yes," he said, "I went to Chicago but I came back. I haven't finished my business here yet. Not by a good sight. And I'm going to talk business to you, Miss Simpson, as soon as we can get to a good place. I know you're a smart young lady that don't get left unless it's extremely frigid, and I don't suppose you've any objections to making a little money, as long as you can make it in an honest and ladylike way."

Lizzie was a trifle disappointed. Still "Fellers," were plenty, and money was scarce.

"I'd like to, first-rate," she said.

Brown stopped at a door near by. "Here's a good quiet place to have a talk; let us go in."

Lizzie hesitated.

"I won't tell you any lies, Miss Simpson. It's a private room at the back of a liquor store where young ladies go to have a quiet glass of wine or any-

thing else they like. It's entirely private, and much more comfortable than the street on a cold night like this."

"Gracious, Mr. Brown, how can you? I wouldn't go in there for anything."

"Well, of course, Miss Simpson, you'll suit yourself. We can arrange our little matter on the street, I think, though it's not so pleasant. Understand: this thing has got to be done on the dead quiet. If certain parties knew that I was speaking to you tonight, the whole thing would be gone up. So of course you don't want to speak about this, even to your nearest friend."

The detective looked around suspiciously. It was a quiet street. A thinly clad laborer with hunched-up shoulders and his hands in his pockets, was passing under a gas lamp. The detective made a mental note of his appearance.

"Before I say any more, promise me you won't say anything about this to anybody." She promised.

He thrust a small package into her hand.

"Do you promise never to say anything about this business so help you God?"

"Certainly, Mr. Brown."

"All right," he said as he took back the package. "Now you're under oath, Miss Simpson. What I gave you was a Bible. Since you've sworn not to say anything about it, I don't mind telling you that I'm a detective. I've been sent down from Chicago to investigate some things that's been goin' on here. We need help from an outsider, and a lady, and I think you're just the one."

“Do you?”

“We pay for all help given us, and of course we shall pay you. If you can do what we want you to, it’ll be worth fifty dollars, and anything less in proportion.”

“I’m sure, I’ll do the best I can, Mr. Brown.”

“All right. Now then, to tell you just what’s wanted. It’s like this. There are people in this town that are called Anarchists. You know what they are, I suppose.”

“My! Yes.”

“Well, I’ve been sent down here especially to look up some evidence against some of these fellows, to prove that they’ve been entering into a conspiracy to murder the governor of the state, and some other officials. Now one of these Anarchist fellows is a young man that you know.”

“Mr. Nomanson?”

“That’s the name he goes by here but it ain’t his right name. However, that don’t matter. Might I ask, is this young fellow a particular friend of yours?”

“He ain’t a friend of mine, Mr. Brown. He’s an acquaintance, that’s all.”

“Well, Miss Simpson, you’re lucky his not being anything more than an acquaintance, for he’s a bad, dangerous fellow. I know things about him that would scare you if I was to tell you, and the less any young lady has to do with him, the better.”

“I believe you, Mr. Brown. I never liked him. When I first saw him, I said to myself, ‘I’ve got a natural antipathy to that man.’”

"You're quite right in feeling that way, Miss Simpson. Now it would be a good thing if this young man was locked up. If you knew as much about him as I do you'd say so yourself. What I want is to get him identified as the man that threw a dynamite bomb at a certain person in New York a year ago. The person who can identify him will be here on the 9th of February and will be at the ball which the Thirty-third Regiment is to give on that date at the Armory. Now, I want this young fellow to be there too. The difficulty is to get him so as to be identified. That's where we want your help. I'll give you two tickets to the ball, and you get him to go with you."

"But, Mr. Brown, he don't ever go to balls or parties or anything like that. He don't dance for one thing."

"Pshaw, *you* can make him do anything you like. I can see that plain enough. If you do, it's worth fifty dollars."

Lizzie giggled. "He always was kind of gone on me," she said.

The slouching man had left the street.

"To be more explicit," continued the detective, when half a dozen noisy, laughing men had passed, "what I want you to do is this. To-morrow I'll send you two tickets for the ball. You get him to go as your escort. Perhaps he'll say, at first, he'd rather not go. If he does, you tell him if he don't go you'll go with another fellow; or something of that kind. I'll leave that to you. You will know best how to make him go."

"I'll do my best. You can bet on that."

"I'll send you a little satchel just before you start. You don't want to look inside of that; but get him to carry it. You can tell him it's got some of your things in it. You want to be very careful with it, especially not to drop it. Tell him to be very careful with it."

While giving her these last instructions he watched her closely, wishing that she had been willing to go into the liquor store with him, so that he might have seen her face by full gaslight. As it was he could see no signs of discomposure. She only showed that her curiosity was aroused.

"My gracious, Mr. Brown, if that ain't one of the funniest things I ever heard. What is there going to be in that satchel?"

Brown had expected this question and was ready for it.

"If you must know, Miss Simpson, it's a private signal that we've arranged with each other. The bag will be a certain size, and made of red Russia leather. That'll be a mark by which he'll be known to one of our men who'll be on duty at the door of the Armory. This man will keep him in sight until the other identifies him, and then he'll be arrested quietly without making any more row than absolutely necessary. So you see that gripsack is one of the most important things in the whole business and you must be sure that he has it in his hand when he goes in the door."

"Very well, Mr. Brown, I'll do the best I can, I'm sure."

On looking back the detective observed three women not far behind. He continued :

“ And now, Miss Simpson, if you’ll excuse me I think I’d better be saying good night. I have told you already that certain parties have their eye on me. I’m one of the most dangerous enemies that these people have and it ain’t often that I get a chance to speak to any one without being spied on. Just remember what I say, and be sure you don’t give it away ; and remember you’re workin’ in a good cause. You needn’t have no hesitation in doin’ what I ask you to ; ‘cause you’ll be workin’ on the side o’ lawr an’ order. Good evenin’.”

Lizzie was not by any means as confident of her ability to persuade Nomanson to go to the ball, as she had felt while in the presence of the detective. When she got home that evening it was too late to begin operations, and in the morning there was not time enough. When she came from work that evening, she found the letter with the tickets awaiting her. She was not at all troubled with bashfulness, but was still somewhat at a loss how to begin.

At dinner she showed the tickets to Miss Jennings, who sat beside her.

“ Hallo ! ” she said, “ for the Thirty third Regiment ball. Who sent them to you ? Mr. Brown ? ”

“ Why the idea ! He wouldn’t be likely to send me tickets after my not taking any notice of the note he wrote me.”

She watched Nomanson, to see whether his suspicions had been aroused by the mention of the detective’s name. He showed no sign of having no-

ticed. His whole attention was given to a tough slice of roastbeef.

Miss Jennings looked at her companion quizzically, as she handed back the tickets.

“Let me see ‘em, will you, Liz?” said a young woman on the opposite side of the table.

“I wouldn’t go to none o’ them Thirty-third Regiment balls,” said another. “There’s an awful common crowd generally goes. My sister went last year an’ she said she wouldn’t go agin’.”

“All the nicest people in New Manchester goes,” said Lizzie, rather sharply. “All the officers of the regiment goes, and their families.”

The other could think of no answer but a sniff.

“Who’s goin’ with yer, Liz?” inquired a round-faced butcher’s boy from the end of the table.

“Never you mind who’s goin’; I’ll tell you this much—it ain’t you.”

Nomanson showed no curiosity whatever in regard to the tickets. He finished his dinner, and started up-stairs. Lizzie had taken care to finish before him, but had economized with the last bit of pie until he rose. She followed him at once. She hated to do it, but if he once got a good start of her, she could not get within calling distance. When she reached the head of the basement stairs he was half-way up the next flight.

“Mr. Nomanson!”

He heard her, and it recalled the day when alone and friendless in a strange city, he had been glad to turn back at the sound of her voice, and try to forget for a time, in her society, the unaccustomed

weight of disgrace and vengeful purpose. He looked over the banisters to see her smiling up at him.

“Well?” he said.

“I am going to ask a favor of you; will you go to the Thirty-third Regiment ball with me next week?”

He answered with good-natured astonishment “Go to a ball! I’m not the sort of fellow to go to a ball. Why don’t you get some one that knows how to dance?”

“I don’t want anybody but you. If you won’t go, I won’t go; and that’s all about it.”

“But I haven’t got any clothes to go in.”

“The suit you wear on Sundays is good enough. I think you *might* go.”

He had no particular objection to going, and she seemed to have set her heart on it. With all his pride and fierceness he was disposed to be kind to anything that had never injured him.

“Well,” he said, “you know I can’t do anything but stand around and look on.”

“I don’t mind. If I want to dance, I’ll dance with some of the other fellows. So you’ll go, really?”

“Yes.”

“Thanks, ever so much. It’s on Wednesday night you know.”

He nodded and went up-stairs. Highly elated, Lizzie turned into the parlor, wearing a satisfied smile.

“Well,” she said, “I ain’t so ugly that I can’t twist a man around my finger, anyhow.”

Miss Simpson was right, but when two women undertake to twist one man around two distinct and separate fingers, something is liable to break. If she had heard a conversation that took place in Iron City two days later and had understood the language in which it was conducted her self-sufficiency would have received a rude shock. Translated, it ran as follows :

“I have a piece of news for you, my dear.”

“Ah ?”

“About your young man.”

“Good.”

“He is going to the ball.”

“Hein ? To the Plutocrat’s ball ?”

“Truly, and not alone.”

“With her ?”

The speaker whirled round from the glass where she had been putting some finishing touches to her toilet, her eyes fairly flashing, and the lines in her face seemed to grow deeper, and her thin lips thinner.

“Stamm told me. He does not know. But he says that it is with one of the girls in the house who they say is his ‘mash’, as they call it in the American language.”

“There is one for him, and one only. You know that.”

“I have my belief on the subject.”

“I have knowledge.”

The speaker turned once more to her glass—and was startled. “*Nom de Dieu*,” she said to herself, “this will not do. I look ten years older.”

She was a strong-willed woman, and presently she had the tide of unreasoning fury under control. She turned away from the mirror with a little laugh.

“The poor child,” she said. “It is hard to have to take him away from her, for she loves him honestly, with what capacity she has. But in the cause of humanity—the individual must stand aside. Come on, *ma petite*, I am ready. We shall be late as it is.”

CHAPTER XX.

ONE of the most remarkable buildings in New Manchester is the Armory of the Thirty-third Regiment. A bastile-like pile of red brick, with four round towers, it looms above the roofs of the city and is one of the first things that attracts the attention of travellers on the Central Illinois Railroad as the train swings around the bend of the river. It owed its origin to the riots of 1877. The lords of industry learned a lesson then. When the trouble was over they determined that the next outbreak should not find them unprepared. A regiment was organized, and a quiet but powerful influence was brought to bear on the Legislature. Every year an appropriation was secured, and in five years the building was finished.

It was situated on the highest ground in the town and fronted on the Boulevard. In the rear was a parade-ground. The building was loopholed for musketry, and the door was protected by a huge portcullis of iron. There was an air of impregnability about it that made the millionaires feel very comfortable as they spun past every day behind their fast trotters and high-steppers.

But their satisfaction would have been small, indeed, had they not known that this imposing structure was only a shell fitted to contain a kernel of carefully selected material. The Thirty-third Regiment was

a creature of the millionaires, and admirably adapted to its purpose. Their sons and nephews formed the majority of the officers, and their clerks and salesmen most of the rank and file. There was never any lack of recruits, for the service was made agreeable. All drills took place during business hours, and leave was freely granted to attend them. In fact it was not well, in a business way, for any employer to refuse. The unwritten law on that subject was well known and complied with.

Victor LaFord was Adjutant of the Thirty-third, and, as such, the young ladies admired him even more than in his ordinary character. It was all the rage to attend dress parade and guard mounting for the avowed purpose of seeing him ; and his pictures in full uniform were the pride of photograph albums. Sancroft, the Colonel, had been a millionaire himself, but had been hard hit in '73, and finished in '77. A talkative, genial old gentleman, and a veteran of the war, he was at once popular and respected, in spite of his inability to learn Upton's tactics.

It has been said already that service in the Thirty-third was agreeable, and one of the pleasantest events of the year was the grand ball given annually by the privates and non-commissioned officers. The expense was borne by the officers, who bought all the tickets and then distributed them to the men of their commands, reserving a few for their own friends. The upper circle not only attended the ball, but on that one occasion during the year, condescended to dance with the enlisted men of the regiment.

On the morning that preceded the ball, Violet was

late at breakfast. When she came into the room every one had left the table except George, who was late also. He had come from Chicago, the evening before, for the special purpose of escorting Violet to the ball. He looked up from his paper and greeted her with: "Hello, Vi."

She resented his salutation, and as she finished her breakfast, with a saucy repartee to some taunt of George's she inquired:

"Where's Uncle? Did he go to the office this morning?"

"No. If you were not a girl I'd tell you something; but you'd give it away."

"I promise you—I take my solemn oath I won't. There!"

"I know better than to trust any girl."

"Oh! you horrid, mean thing. Not that I care about it. I don't believe you know anything, anyhow, and you're just as hateful as you can be."

"Well, I guess I'll have to tell you."

"I don't want to hear it now, thank you."

"Oh! I'm sorry. But of course, if you don't want to know—"

"Yes, I do, I do, I do. Tell me, tell me quick; that's a dear, good boy."

George had meant to tell her from the beginning. He knew by experience that no one could keep a secret better. So he leaned forward and said in a low tone:

"He's in the sanctum now, and he's got a detective with him."

Violet's eyes opened wide in amazement.

"I know the fellow well. I've seen him in our office many a time. He knew me, too, when I met him in the hall, though he didn't let on; neither did I. Have you any idea what the governor's up to?"

"My gracious! No."

"Well, those fellows come high, and a man don't have them around for nothing."

There came a sound of voices and footsteps in the hall and an opening and closing of doors. The two young people went to one of the long windows that commanded a view of the lawn, and saw a tall, thin man come out of the house and enter a closed carriage.

"That's the fellow," said George. "His name is Steelyard."

Near the western end of St. Joseph's Place, beyond the Boulevard, the carriage entered a driveway leading to a Queen Anne cottage, where Mr. Steelyard inquired for Colonel Sancroft, and was informed that the Colonel was unwell and confined to his room.

"My business is very important," said the detective, blandly. "I must see the Colonel on business connected with the regiment, now or this afternoon. Tell him that."

The Colonel would see the gentleman, who was shown up.

The Colonel was seated in an armchair, and the bandages that swathed one foot indicated the nature of the owner's illness.

The detective bowed, and seated himself without waiting for an invitation.

"Before I explain the object of my visit, Colonel,

I want to make sure nobody's listening. If you'll excuse me, I'll just take a look around."

Col. Sancroft followed Mr. Steelyard with his eyes, as the latter examined the doors and closets. When he thought he had sufficiently impressed his host with the importance of the matter in hand, the detective seated himself close to the Colonel; and, leaning forward, threw back the lapel of his coat, showing a nickel badge.

"I'm a member of the Chicago detective force, and I've come for the express purpose of informing you that there is an Anarchist plot to blow up the Thirty-third Regiment with dynamite."

The Colonel stared in blank amazement.

"I don't wonder you're surprised," Steelyard continued. "But they're up to any deviltry you can imagine. Of course they hate your Regiment; and nothing would suit them better than to blow you all into the middle of next week. And what's more, they'll do it, unless proper steps are taken to prevent them."

The Colonel half rose, but fell back with a groan.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "I am helpless. What shall I do?"

The detective drew nearer and laid his long forefinger on the old gentleman's knee.

"That's just what I came here to tell you."

Mr. Steelyard had overdone it. The Colonel had partially regained his faculties, and began to resent the idea of being taken under the protection of this stranger. He drew back with some haughtiness.

"Excuse me, sir," he said "but I was—ah—ad-

dressing myself. I was—ah—simply asking myself a question, and I have already answered it in my own mind. I know what I will do."

Steelyard also drew back and assumed indifference in his reply.

"Well, sir; I have done *my* duty in warning you. I was sent to do it, and I've done it. Of course, you needn't take my advice unless you feel like it. But being a soldier, accustomed to fair fighting in the open field, you can hardly be expected to know as much about these sneaking dynamiters as we do. We know their ways—you don't, and if they manage to blow the ground from under your feet just when you least suspect it—why, I won't be surprised, that's all. I think it only fair to state, however, that I have some information in regard to the details of this plot, which you ought to know."

The Colonel bowed in dignified acquiescence.

"I shall be very happy, sir, to receive any information that you may have to impart, as well as advice I have no doubt that both will be valuable. But, of course, I must be the sole judge as to what measures should be taken."

"All right, sir, that suits me exactly; especially as it relieves me of all responsibility.—Now, there's a gang of dynamiters in this town, which we know to be in correspondence with the main gang in Chicago. Here, sir, is a description of the most important."

The Colonel took the paper and glanced over it.

"You'll observe, Col. Sancroft, that two of the names are marked in red ink. Those two men have been selected by lot to do the deed."

The Colonel felt a peculiar sensation run down his spine. This looked like business.

“Tompkins, Henry Stephen. Occupation, Weaver. Residence, No. 111 South Street. Height, 5ft. 3in. Complexion, florid. Hair and moustache, red. No beard. Eyes, gray. Age, about 30. Came from Chicago Dec. 2nd, to look for work. Joined Anarchists as soon as came. Had letter from Chicago signed by Parsons. Very taciturn, but attends all meetings and seems interested. Never goes till end.

“Nomanson, John. Occupation, nail maker. Residence, No. 91 Eleventh Street. Height, about 5ft. 11in. Complexion, middling. Hair and eyes, dark brown. No beard or moustache. Age, 21. Came from New York in July last. Joined Anarchists at once. Character, moody and morose. Complains constantly because violent measures are not taken.”

The Colonel looked up: “May I ask, sir, when this precious affair is to take place?”

“Some time to-night. The exact time I don’t know.”

“Great heavens, sir! And why was I not informed of this before?”

“Because it was only found out last night.”

“And how was it found out, may I ask?”

“That, sir, I must beg you’ll excuse me from telling. I know you can keep a secret, of course; but it’s a strict rule of our service to tell nobody *how* we get information. I *know* it to be reliable. *How* I know it is a professional secret, and I would not be doing my duty if I was to give it away.”

"Well, sir, if you have anything further to say I will be glad to hear it."

"Simply this. We don't know whether they intend to blow it up from the outside or the inside. If you like, I and a friend of mine will be there, and keep a sharp lookout. We know the men, and, as soon as we see them, we'll nab them. I'd advise you to post sentinels outside, with orders to arrest any suspicious characters that approach the building. Inside, have a guard at the entrance. One of us will be there all the time, and if they come in that way we've got them. They'll probably come in with the crowd, if at all. If they try to blow it up from outside, it won't be so dangerous."

"But, my good man," exclaimed the Colonel, "you seem to forget that I am not in a condition to give orders. Do you expect me, sir, to get up from this chair, put on a boot," the Colonel's face contracted at the very thought, "and take command of the regiment? I am tied here to this chair, sir; incapable of movement. What am I to do?"

"I'll bring your desk over here, and you can write a note to the Major, or whoever is second in command. I'll engage to carry it to him myself."

"Ah—yes. Very good. But—ah—I think I prefer to have a talk with Lieutenant-Colonel Carleton. I will write a note requesting him to come here at once. Perhaps you will be good enough to take it to his office. You can come back with him, and then we will see what had better be done. This matter needs very careful consideration. Now, sir, if you

will be good enough to hand me the desk I will be much obliged to you."

"I think, sir, that we three can arrange matters to circumvent this diabolical plot," said the Colonel, as he handed the note to Steelyard.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ladies of New Manchester were taking a nap, to brace themselves in advance for the loss of a night's rest. Almost all sign of life disappeared from the fashionable portion of the town, except around the Armory. There, the great front gate stood open, wagons were arriving and departing; and, inside, were men on ladders, hanging festoons of evergreens and flowers; and polishing the brass chandeliers; others were waxing the floor of the great drill room. In the midst of these festive preparations stood the lieutenant-colonel, a straight, soldierly man, with a long, drooping moustache. He conversed frequently in low and earnest tones with three officers, of whom Victor Laford was one.

Mrs. Laford and Violet were asleep; Lillian was in the library, with a volume of Schiller on her lap. Sometimes she read, but most of the time she gazed dreamily into the fire. John Laford went to the James Street factory, but returned an hour before dinner. He was pacing restlessly up and down his office, when the sound of carriage wheels attracted his attention. With an exclamation of relief, he threw himself into his office chair, and Steelyard was ushered into the room.

“ Well, sir? ” demanded Laford, impatiently.

“ It's all right, ” was the reply, given slowly and composedly. “ Everything O. K. The colonel and

lieutenant-colonel are going to do just what I tell them. There's to be a line of men all around the place—of course, they won't be needed, but it's best to pretend not to know too much. I'll be at the front door with two of our men, and, as soon as he comes, we'll nab him. The girl has been seen again to-day, and she says he's coming for certain, and she'll see that he carries the satchel. Another satchel has been prepared to be found outside the line of guards to-morrow morning. That will make them think a double attempt was made, but that the other fellow was frightened away."

Laford swung his chair, nervously.

"This is a dangerous piece of business, Mr. Steel-yard, and the farther it goes the more anxious I get about it. Do you think it absolutely necessary to use real dynamite cartridges?"

"Certain, sir. We must have them for evidence."

"But suppose, by some accident, those things should be set off. They would blow the whole place to atoms."

"Sure enough. But we mustn't let any accident happen."

"That is easily said; but suppose that satchel should be dropped in the scuffle when you arrest him?"

"I'll take care of that, sir. I'll grab that satchel out of his hand the first thing, and see that it's kept safe. You trust me for that."

"What time is he expected to be there?"

"Between half-past nine and ten."

"I suppose he'll certainly be there before eleven."

"Oh! yes. I guess there's no doubt about that."

The detective peered intently at Laford. In the dim light that came from the shaded lamp, he could not see the expression of his face very plainly. But he saw enough to convince him that there was danger of the "job" being countermanded at the last moment. If so, objections might be made to paying the entire sum promised; and, besides, it was a neat piece of work, and he felt a professional pride in its success.

"I don't think you need have any fear, Mr. Laford. Now I come to think of it, my man, who prepared the satchels, used a cartridge that won't go off except with a percussion-cap. There's clock-work in each satchel, which makes a hammer strike a cap, and they're set for midnight, and can't possibly go off sooner. I'd forgotten that when you first spoke about it; but there wouldn't have been any danger, anyhow. We know this is a very delicate job, and we're being very careful about it."

Judging from the expression of the millionaire's face that his anxiety had been lessened by these assurances, the detective rose, and remarking that he still had a number of things to attend to, asked if there were any further instructions. Receiving a reply in the negative, he took his leave.

When Steelyard had gone, Laford sat for some time in thought. Then he rang for a servant and ordered the carriages to be ready at eleven o'clock. The servant said that Mrs. Laford had already ordered them for half-past nine. The master of the house replied that he knew that but that they had de-

cided not to start till eleven. When the servant had left, Laford went up to his wife's dressing room.

Elizabeth Laford was in full ball costume, for the ladies had decided to dress for the ball before dinner in order to save trouble. Her tall figure was arrayed in white satin, and her maid was kneeling, engaged in adjusting her train. Her hair, still abundant, though tinged with gray, was piled on top of her head, and held there by a cluster of diamonds. Brilliants also sparkled on her white arms and neck. She was a beautiful sight, and her husband looked at her with admiration before he spoke.

"Elizabeth, when you have quite finished dressing I would like to speak with you."

She dismissed her maid with a sign, and turned to hear what her husband had to say.

The admiration was still in his eyes. She colored slightly and was pleased, for she liked to be admired, even by a man for whom she had no particular affection.

Laford seemed to have some difficulty in beginning. Then abruptly: "I've got something to tell that may startle you."

"About Victor?" she asked quickly.

"No, not specially."

"Well, whatever it is, let me know."

She grew impatient, and laid her hand on his arm.

"Whatever it is, I'm not afraid to hear it. So speak out."

"You may have heard of people called Anarchists."

"Oh! yes, often. But I didn't suppose that anybody paid any attention to them."

"Well, I have received information that these people intend to blow up the Armory to-night."

"You don't believe it?"

Her face paled and her eyes dilated.

"I do believe it."

"Then the ball mustn't take place. Have the people been warned?"

"No."

"But you surely are going to tell them?"

"I am not."

"What! You are going to allow innocent people to be murdered and not lift a finger to save them?"

"Calm yourself and listen to me."

"Certainly. I am very anxious to hear what you have to say."

"In the first place, I am not at liberty to divulge this information. It was given me in confidence, and I cannot even tell you where it came from."

"This is very strange."

"It is. I don't deny that. In the second place, ample precautions have been taken, and the plot will undoubtedly be frustrated."

"Why did you tell me this?"

"Simply because I do not wish you to go to the ball until all danger is over, and, therefore, I have ordered the carriages not to start until eleven."

"But you said just now there would be no danger."

"No, I said that all preparations had been made to frustrate the plot. But, of course, there is never any telling what may happen. I think it best, therefore, not to go until all danger is over."

"But this is cowardly. Why can't the other people be warned?"

"Because the police and the regimental officers are determined to arrest the criminals, and if the thing should be known to many people, it might be given away. You never can tell where these conspirators will be. Maybe at your elbow and nobody suspect it. Things must be allowed to go on as usual, and then the rascals will fall into the trap."

"But, if there is no danger, why should we stay away?"

"I've told you already, that there is some danger, in my opinion, though the police say not. I merely wish to be on the safe side."

"Well, the thing is very mysterious, but of course, I won't attempt to pry into your secrets. And now comes the question, how is this thing to be explained? The young people expect to go early. What am I to say to them?"

"I leave that to you. Your womanly tact and ingenuity must supply that. I am sure you can do it."

"I don't think it so very easy. They will be disappointed, and ask all sorts of questions. I'm sure I don't know what to say."

"That's why I spoke to you early, to give you plenty of time to think about it."

"Well, I will do the best I can. But how horrible this is, I can scarcely realize it. What will the wretches do next?"

"There is no telling. The town is in a very dangerous state. But I hope the Government will make

this affair a lesson to them. I believe that one or two of the most dangerous of them will be in jail by to-morrow, and I hope they will be made an example of."

"I suppose they ought to be. But it seems to me that something might be done with these poor creatures that would render all this force and punishment unnecessary."

"I know what your opinions are on that subject, and they are very noble, and all that, but entirely impracticable. These fellows must be made to understand that the authorities don't mean to be trifled with. That is the only way to make them behave themselves."

Victor Laford appeared at dinner in full uniform. When he had finished his coffee, he went at once to the hall, and began to envelope himself in a heavy overcoat.

His mother called him, and he came back and stood in the doorway buttoning his coat, while he waited for her to speak.

It was not she, but Violet who spoke.

"Where are you going?"

"To the Armory."

"But you're not going yet?"

"Yes, I am."

"But what for?"

"Guard-mounting."

"What are you going to have guard-mounting for?"

"Oh! we always post a few sentinels here and there—just to keep the crowd back."

"You're coming back, I suppose, before it's time to start."

"I don't think so. I'll let George escort both of you."

Violet pouted a little. Mrs. Laford said quickly: "I wish you, particularly, to come home as soon as the guard-mounting is over."

All four young people looked at her. Her husband kept his eyes averted.

"Why?" inquired Victor.

"I think you ought to go to the ball with your sister and cousin."

"But they are excellently provided for. I really don't see the use in my coming back here again?"

"I wish it."

"But I'm expected to be there. The lieutenant-colonel said he wanted three of us officers to be on hand early for a particular reason."

"And I want you, particularly, to come home. Why can't you come? What is there for you to do at the armory after guard mounting?"

"Nothing special. But I and two others are expected to be there."

"Who are the other two?"

"The officer of the day, and the officer of the guard."

"What do you want of all that military business, anyhow?" demanded Violet. "I thought you were going there to-night to dance, and not to play soldier."

"There's not much play about this."

"Hey?" inquired George. "What do you mean?"

"Oh! I was only joking. Of course I didn't mean anything."

Mrs. Laford rose, walked to the door, and laid her hand on her son's arm.

"Victor," she said, earnestly, "I don't often ask a favor of you, but I do to-night. Come back as soon as you can. I know Col. Carleton will give you leave of absence if you tell him that I particularly wish it."

The young man hesitated. He did not expect to spend an altogether comfortable evening, waiting for the awful and mysterious assault of the dynamiters. He presently yielded, gave the desired promise, and his mother allowed him to go.

When he arrived at the armory he found the men appointed for guard duty awaiting orders. They were standing around the door of the great hall, in heavy overcoats and glazed caps; conversing in low whispers. The lights were as yet only half on. He went through the guard-mounting; and, having sent the guard to its post, sought the commanding officer, and inquired whether he should be needed for any further duty. The lieutenant-colonel was unable to think of anything he wanted done, but he did not give the desired permission to leave the armory in a very gracious manner. However, he gave it; and the young man started for home, annoyed, and, at the same time, considerably relieved.

About twenty minutes later the guests began to arrive. When the first carriage drove up, the armorer turned on the full power of the lights, and the inside of the armory was in a blaze of splendor.

The two sentinels at the great door, and the knot of soldiers near by inspected the new comers somewhat anxiously, and were relieved to detect nothing more formidable than two privates with their sweethearts. As the guests came thicker and faster, the scrutiny of the guard became more rigid. Keeping near the door, the lieutenant-colonel and the officer of the guard watched as keenly as the sentinels. Lounging about in inconspicuous positions, but always keeping an eye on the door, were two men in evening dress. One of these men was tall and lean, who, in an unguarded moment, had allowed a drop of tobacco juice to disfigure his shirt bosom. The other was fat, and good-natured looking. They exchanged a word now and then, sometimes with each other, sometimes with the officers. The hall filled up ; the buzz of conversation became louder. About half-past nine the aristocrats began to arrive. The lesser folk crowded around the doors and staircases to watch them as they came in and ascended to the dressing rooms. Some of the saleswomen and female clerks felt their hearts burn with envy as the silks and satins, jewels and laces went past them ; but most of them felt only good-natured admiration of the "pretty things," and thankfulness that they had the opportunity of seeing them.

About half-past nine, the sentinels suddenly stood at attention, and presented arms. A gray-headed man in the uniform of a brigadier-general, with a girl in a white opera cloak on his arm passed between them. The officers stepped forward to meet him, and saluted. The general stood talking for a few

minutes, and then went upstairs. Shortly afterwards the music began an overture preparatory to the grand march.

The stream of guests passing in, and the throng about the entrance was thinning fast. The lieutenant-colonel, leaning anxiously over the balustrade, caught Steelyard's eye, and beckoned to him. The detective sauntered forward, and presently stood beside him.

"Do you think it possible, Mr. Steelyard, that any of those scoundrels can have got past the sentinels unobserved?"

"Well, sir, whether they might or might not get past the sentinels I don't pretend to know. But unless they're sharper than any other rascals in America, they didn't pass *me* and *my partner* unobserved. You can rest easy, colonel. They haven't come yet, and all the better. I'd rather not have the thing happen in the midst of a big crowd."

With a reassuring nod the detective lounged away.

The music stopped. There was a long roll of the drum, a clash of cymbals, and the march from the Huguenots pealed forth. With an ill grace, the lieutenant-colonel hurried away to find his partner. He was none too soon, for the procession was forming. First, came the general and the colonel's sister. Next, the lieutenant-colonel and the general's daughter. Then, a resplendent column, the officers and their friends and relatives. After these, the non-commissioned officers and privates, with *their* friends and relatives; less gold-lace and jewels, more high-

necked and long-sleeved dresses, but making a gallant show nevertheless.

Well towards the front walked Lucy Locus, her delicate white hand resting lightly on the blue sleeve of a young lieutenant. Her companion found her difficult to talk to until he happened to say that none of the Lafords had appeared.

“Indeed,” she said, “I’ve just been wondering where they were. Have you any idea why they haven’t come?”

“No, I thought Victor would be here, surely, as he is adjutant. Maybe Miss Eversley couldn’t come, and he wouldn’t come without her. They say he’s awfully gone on her.”

He felt the hand on his sleeve quiver, and looked down compassionately at the frail white arm and shoulder beside him.

“It’s awfully cold in here,” he said. “They seem unable to warm this place in winter, it’s so big. But it will be all right when the dancing begins.”

“I do feel a little chilly. I wish this tiresome march was over, and we could dance. But, speaking of the Lafords, what makes you think Miss Eversley isn’t well?”

“Oh! I don’t think so. I only thought it might be so.”

“I know Miss Eversley loves dancing. I shouldn’t think she’d want to stay away.”

“No, I should say not. Have you spoken to the General? He’s a first-rate fellow. I hardly got a chance to speak to the young lady, but I think she’s nice looking, don’t you?”

"Oh! yes," answered Miss Locus, and her interest in the conversation flagged again.

The music had changed from Meyerbeer to Strauss. The stately procession had broken up into a kaleidoscope of revolving colors. Imperturbable in face, Steelyard was growing very anxious. He feared that, after all his trouble, there was a screw loose somewhere, and he kept more out of sight than ever.

Brown, who felt even a greater responsibility, was still more anxious. But, he too masked his feelings. With a broad smile on his good-humored face, he walked, and stood, and talked reassuringly with the officers; but, when he spoke with the other detective, a scowl and a muttered oath betrayed his inward annoyance.

The two were chatting in a corner, when Steelyard suddenly exclaimed "Great Scott! at last. Look. There's Dick." Brown turned quickly and saw a small man with a red moustache, at the foot of the staircase. Steelyard beckoned to him, and he came to them.

"Well," demanded Brown, "where in hell have you been all this time?"

"I've been where I was told to go."

"All right. What's the matter? Why don't they come?"

"Because the girl's been knifed.—Yes, knifed and I saw it done."

The two detectives swore, not loud but deep. Dick went on.

"I done what you told me to do after I left you. I got supper, and then I went down to the young

fellow's house to wait for him to start. They didn't come out till pretty late; I don't know just when it was, but after nine o'clock considerably. There was a lot of people around the door looking at them, and I heard one of the girls call out to hold up her dress for fear of the mud. Then one of the fellows begged them to come home early ; and another not to drink too much champagne.

“They came down the steps, and she took his arm, as far as the corner, where they waited for a car. I was on the opposite corner.

“All of a sudden, I saw a woman, all in black, with a long cloak and a veil, coming along behind them. She came up to them, passed, turned about, and hit the girl in the face. She screamed, and put her hands up to her face. Then she fell backwards, and he caught her. The other woman ran, I ran after her, yelling to her to stop. She wouldn't stop, but ran to a butcher's cart. The man on the driver's seat helped her in and whipped the horse into a gallop. I ran and yelled till I was out of breath, and then I went back.”

“Why didn't you tell 'em you'd shoot if they didn't stop ?” demanded Steelyard.

“I did, but they didn't pay no attention.”

“Did you see what name was on the cart ?” asked Brown.

“No, it was too dark.”

“Well, I don't know as I care much about it. What became of the girl ?”

“I went back, and I found the girl walking back to the house leaning on the young fellow. I offered

to help, and we took her to the house together. She was holding a handkerchief to her face, and it was soaked with blood. There was an awful commotion ; some of the women screamed, and ran away, and others crowded around her. As I wanted to keep dark I made myself scarce before any of them had time to notice me ; and then I came here to tell you about it."

" You were a fool to speak to the young fellow at all," said Brown, sullenly. " If he sees you again, he'll most likely remember you. But something has got to be done about this. If the girl is killed, we're all right, but if she's only wounded, she may take a notion to squeal on us. We've got to find that out, and find it out now. The next thing is how to do it."

The detective stood thinking.

" I'll tell you what you'd better do, Dick. Send a messenger boy to inquire for the young lady. Tell him if anybody asks who sent him, he is to say that it was a woman in a long cloak and a black veil. Do that as quick as you can, and come here again with the answer. You know where the office is, don't you ? "

The subordinate nodded, and was gone at once. Brown looked up, and saw that the lieutenant-colonel and officer of the guard were watching them intently from the head of the lower flight of stairs. He began to whistle, and strolled towards them.

" It's all right, Colonel," he said, when he reached them. " One of my men has just been in to report some suspicious looking fellows lurking about at a

distance, and I think it will be well for me and my partner to have a look at them."

"I'll go along," said the officer of the guard.

"Better not, sir. They'll see your uniform and that will give the snap away. They won't suspect us. Besides, when we're gone, you'll want to keep a special good lookout in here."

With these words, the detective went back to his companions; and, after a short conversation, they put on their overcoats, and went out.

"Well, Jim," said Steelyard, when they had got well away from the stragglers about the armory, "I've been badly left before, but I never knew anything worse than this. After all our trouble and expense, to have the thing spoilt in this way, when it was just going to pan out rich—why, it's enough to make a man go out of the business."

"I ain't going out of the business yet a while—you can bet your life on that. If only the girl don't give it away, we may work the thing yet."

"Who's the woman, do you think?"

"No telling. Very likely one of those Anarchists. But it may be some woman we've never heard of that's got some grudge against her. We can find that out when we can see the girl, most likely. The thing is now how to keep her mouth shut. She'll be frightened, and want to confess to somebody, and I don't see how to stop her."

Steelyard swore, and chewed hard while he waited for what Brown might yet have to say. Finally the fat detective arrived at a solution of the problem and proceeded to impart it to his companion.

"We'll have to wait till Dick comes back. He may tell us that the girl is dead. In that case, we are all right. If she's only hurt, then we must send another message, telling her to keep quiet about this thing—signed by Dick. It may not do any good, but there's nothing else to be done. Then he must see her as soon as he can. That's all we can do. At least, that's the way it seems to me. What do you think about it?"

"I think as you do. It's a bad business, any way you fix it, but I don't see what else is to be done."

"If she does go back on us, the job will have to be given up, and we don't want to be fooling around here after that. In fact, the farther off we are, the better, in that case. If the story gets out people may believe it. If they do, I'd feel more comfortable in Chicago than here. Anyway the game would be lost, and there's no use wasting time."

Steelyard nodded.

"Well, come on. Let's walk around the place and come in on the other side. We'll have to keep about a block between us and the sentinels, or we'll get shot for dynamiters. We'll take it slowly, and I'll make up some cock-and-bull story to tell the Colonel."

Carleton met the two detectives at the door and they ascended the stairs together. At the top, the Colonel stopped, and inquired, "Well, what did you see outside?"

"We saw a dozen of them, at least. They are entirely baffled by finding the place guarded. They don't know what to make of it; and they keep hanging around, and seem undecided what to do."

"Don't you think we ought to arrest some of them?" asked the lieutenant-colonel.

"That's just what I was going to propose. It's risky business, of course, arresting men with dynamite bombs in their pockets, but I suppose the rascals ought to be run in, and made an example of."

"Very well, I shall have a couple of squads detailed immediately to make the arrest. I shall take charge of one myself, and the officer of the guard the other. If you will come with us, your assistance will no doubt be valuable."

"All right, Colonel. You can count on us. I think the rascals will probably clear out when they see soldiers coming, but we may nab a few of them."

The soldiers went out into the damply glaring light of the electric lamps, and divided into two parties. Steelyard went with the squad commanded by the officer of the guard, and Brown with the other.

The soldiers proceeded cautiously, and with very perceptible nervousness. Carleton walked at the head of his men, with Brown beside him. They went on, under the dripping trees, keeping a sharp lookout on every side, and turned into Elm Avenue. Here the only lights were some gas lamps, and the shadows were less strongly marked, but the general dimness of the street made the party still more nervous. When they had reached the middle of the block, Brown exclaimed: "There they go. Do you see them, Colonel? Lord! look at them run."

"Where? I don't see them."

"They're gone now. They went round the corner. Didn't any of you see them?"

"Yes, I did," answered a young private. "I saw three of them."

"I saw them, just before you spoke," said another. "They were standing against the fence by those bushes. I'd have spoken, only I wasn't sure they were men, and I didn't want to give a false alarm. All I could see was a black mass of something, and when this gentleman spoke I looked away, and when I looked back, the thing I saw was gone, so it must have been them."

"I saw them all the way till they turned the corner," said the soldier who had first spoken. "I think one of them had something in his hand."

"Well, they've skipped, any way," said the detective. "There's no use standing here. Come ahead."

The squad started again. They had gone some distance, and turned a corner when a soldier exclaimed, "Colonel, here comes a lot of them."

The whole squad halted without orders, and a series of clicking noises told that their rifles were being cocked.

"Steady there," said Carleton sharply. "Don't fire unless I give you the order. Forward, march."

The men obeyed, and slowly approached the group of figures advancing towards them. Between the two parties was a gas-lamp, and the newcomers were nearest to it. Presently, they came underneath it.

The light showed a dull shimmer of steel against a background of blue.

There was a sigh of relief, a general relaxing of muscles; and the rifles were uncocked. In another moment the lieutenant-colonel and the officer of the

guard had met and were exchanging notes, while the men stood around them in a circle.

No captures had been made by the officer of the guard, and the two squads marched back to the front-door in a much more comfortable state of mind than when they had quitted it.

The damp-coated soldiers, as they streamed in through the great door, were objects of interest to quite a number of people. All those who were in the secret had kept their counsel well, but some of the people had seen that there was something unusual going on, and the rumor had gradually spread. There were plenty of couples spinning on the floor of the ballroom, but there was still a crowd in the hall and on the stairs, in the midst of which was the little man with the red moustache. As Brown passed him, he whispered, "Here's the answer."

The note was as follows:

"Lizzie is not much hurt. Only a cut on the cheek. She has confessed everything to me and begged me to forgive her. She is half frightened to death, for somebody said something about lock-jaw. Thank you for rescuing me from the detectives again."

Brown thrust it into his pocket, and motioned to the lieutenant-colonel, who was standing nearby, evidently anxious to hear the contents of the paper. The three walked out on the steps together. There Brown turned, and said, with a broader smile than usual:

"Well, Colonel, the circus is over. It's now my pleasing duty to wish you good-night, and hope you

will have a first-rate time. My man has been among the rascals, and heard them say they were going to give up the job. They threw their dynamite bombs into the ditch at the corner of the Boulevard and Stanton Street, where you will find them in the morning, if you choose to look. They're terrible cowards, these Anarchists, and they'll never attack you if they see you're ready for them. Still, just to make sure, you might as well keep your guards posted till daylight. We've got an important job on hand to-morrow, and we'll just have time to catch the eleven-forty train for Chicago."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE great dynamite plot had been discussed in the newspapers of the three cities, had created a nine days' wonder, and had been forgotten. Arrests had been threatened, but none made. Many different versions of what had occurred had been circulated and believed, but those few who knew the truth of the affair had kept their own counsel, for very good reasons;—especially obvious in the causes of the actual movers in the plot. Nomanson said nothing from sheer indifference, and Elise Larose never knew that her jealousy had saved him from a conspiracy.

She had no further cause for jealousy, after that. Lizzie concluded that it was best to disappear from the scene; and she did so the day after the ball, and nobody knew what had become of her. As for Frances, she was too shy, and Nomanson too deeply absorbed in his great purpose even to notice that she blushed whenever he spoke to her, although others did. So she avoided him as much as possible, to escape the knowing looks and smiles of the other inmates of the house. She had been thrown out of work when the holiday season was over. A month of enforced rest gave her flesh and color. Her aunt said she was “getting to look real pretty.” It was not her fault that she was idle. She tried hard to get work; and, at last, she succeeded.

"Wanted. A young lady as book-keeper. Apply at the factory, corner of Thompson and Elizabeth Sts. No letters. Salary, \$35 per month."

She had already answered two score advertisements and it was with only a dull glimmering of hope that she walked four miles through a biting wind to the factory. It was west of St. Joseph's Place, in a region of vacant prairie lots, over which the wind whistled with joyous freedom. Wooden cottages were scattered about, singly and in rows. There were no sidewalks, worthy of the name, but she toiled through the half-frozen mud, with dogged perseverance until she reached the huge brick building with its tall chimneys. Used to it as she was, her heart always failed her, as she approached the door.

On entering she found the usual plainly furnished factory office, and a number of young women, waiting to be examined. One was undergoing her ordeal. The examiner was Victor Laford.

He looked so long and earnestly at Frances as she entered, that she wondered whether she had seen him before. Presently disregarding the prior claim of the others, he called Frances, asked her a few questions, and then to her amazement, said he thought she would do.

Hardly able to believe in her good fortune she watched the others file out of the room. She was recalled to herself by the voice of her new employer. He asked her name and address, instructed her in her duties, and set her to work. She was very much afraid of him at first, but he was so business-like, and

treated her so like a machine, that she was soon reassured, and went home in a state of such unusual happiness, that she never knew she was tired till she reached there.

The factory was one of the two belonging to John Laford, and his son was superintendent. It was an office of responsibility for so young a man, but he filled it to his father's satisfaction. He was shrewd and clever, and his father's pride in him increased continually.

January and February had passed, and March had come in like a lion. Nomanson had come home through a blinding snowstorm, and at the dinner table was drinking coffee that tried to atone for its weakness by its extreme heat. Most of the other guests had left the table. Suddenly Mrs. Smith, addressing nobody in particular, exclaimed :

“Oh! dear! Oh! dear! How I do wish Frances was home.”

Nomanson looked around the table, and seeing that he and the butcher's boy were the only persons present, and that the boy's mouth was full, assumed to answer.

“Where is she?”

“I don't know. I suppose she's at the factory. She never was so late coming home before.”

“What factory does she work at?”

“Why, don't you know? Mr. Laford's, at Thompson and Elizabeth Streets. She is book-keeper.”

“Ah!” the indifference was gone from Nomanson's face.

“Why, yes. It's funny you didn't know it.

Young Mr. Victor is superintendent. A very nice, sensible young man he seems to be. When Frances went there, there were as many as forty girls waiting for the place, ahead of her. But as soon as he saw her, he picked her out, and just asked her a few questions, and gave her the place. And he's always been very kind to her. He advanced her part of her wages, the first day, so she wouldn't have to walk all the way home, the poor child didn't have a cent, and it was terrible cold that day. But I'm real anxious about her. It's such a terrible storm, and so dark, and there's an awful rough set of people lives around there, and I do so wish she was home."

She looked at Nomanson, inquiringly. He knew what she meant and rose, saying, "I'll go and bring her home."

"Oh! I couldn't ask you to do that. It's a good four miles, and such a fearful storm."

"I don't mind it. I hope I'll find her at the factory. If she isn't there I won't know where to look for her."

"I do hope you'll find her there. I'll have something hot for both of you when you get home," she added with a wink.

Strong as he was, he found it no child's play to make headway in such a storm. The driving snow almost blinded him. Not a human being was in sight. The electric lights, forcing a glare through the snow-shroud, showed trees with laden and bending branches. The gas lamps at the intersections of the crossroads, (for he seemed to have reached the open country) barely glimmered. At last, a huge,

indistinct mass loomed up before him, and he knew that the first part of his journey was over.

As he reached the door, he heard a voice that he recognized ; it was imploring, and it ended in a sob. Then came that of a man, clear and strong, with a mocking note in it, and ending in a laugh.

Nomanson's heart bounded. With a wrench of the doorknob and a push of three times the force needed he burst the door open. The light blinded him for a moment, but he took two steps into the room for all that. He heard an oath and a scream, and then he was able to see.

The room was plainly furnished with desks and office-chairs. A stove threw out a suffocating heat. Victor Laford was seated in a revolving chair, staring in amazement at the snow-covered apparition before him ; Frances was leaning against a desk, her cheeks wet with tears, her eyes dilated with wonder. Then a great gust of wind nearly extinguished the lamp, and sent the snow whirling in. Nomanson closed the door ; and as he turned, Laford, starting up exclaimed, " Damn you ! What do you mean by coming in here ? "

Frances ran to Nomanson, and seized him by the arm.

" Oh ! " she gasped, " I couldn't believe it was you at first. I can't tell you how glad I am you've come. Oh ! do take me home."

" Certainly I will. That's what I came for."

Laford's face was livid with fury. He strode forward menacingly. Frances shrank behind Nomanson,

Laford stopped in the middle of the room and pointed to the door.

“Get out of here,” he said.

Nomanson made no reply. He felt as if he had the strength of twenty men. His fingers seemed to be iron. The round, white neck of this young aristocrat was almost within reach. A finger laid upon him, and he would have the excuse he wanted, with the girl for a witness.

Victor Laford was a crack football player and the champion light-weight boxer of the Arimathean Club. He had greatly enjoyed on several occasions showing insolent persons of the lower class, how easily he could handle them. But now he found himself daunted by something about this stranger that was different from anything that he had before encountered. The face was like that of an incarnate devil, and the sinewy fingers were fairly hooked, like the talons of a creature of prey. He knew that a fight meant no mere boxing and wrestling match, but a struggle to the death. His arm dropped and he took a step backward.

The fierce joy on Nomanson’s face changed to sudden disgust. He turned to Frances.

“Get your things on,” he said. “We don’t want to stay here all night.”

She could not because they were in a closet which Laford had locked and refused to open—but had not the courage to interfere with Nomanson’s vain attempt to force the door with a poker. When Nomanson returned from his quest for an axe, which the girl told him was in the janitor’s room, to which

she conducted him, they found the closet open, and Laford had fled.

“The fellow’s cowardice has saved him.”

Nomanson said these words with an accent of sullen disappointment.

They went out, leaving the lamp burning. It was not *his* business if anything happened.

There was a lingering hope in Nomanson’s mind that Laford might be lying in wait somewhere outside. But in this he was disappointed.

Taking Frances by the arm, and placing himself between her and the wind, he led her through the snow until under the lee of a miserable shanty, they stopped to rest.

She would not have dared to look at him, had there been light enough to see the tint that came into her face.

“I believe Heaven must have sent you to-night,” she said softly. “How did you ever come to think of it?”

“Your aunt asked me to come.”

“Oh!”

He noticed that she made no attempt to disguise her disappointment, but was unable to understand the reason.

When rested, they went on again. The wind increased in force and the snow whirled round so that it was impossible to shelter her. Again and again she slipped and staggered. When they had toiled as far as St. Joseph’s Place, he was half carrying her. He expected, every moment, to feel her col-

lapse entirely, and he knew that in that case, he would not be able to carry her.

She began to grow sleepy and begged to be allowed to lie down just for a few minutes.

Nomanson understood too well the meaning of this.

"I tell you, you shan't lie down. You shall come with me. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, but I'm so tired."

He dragged her on with him, making her walk quicker than before. She was forced to obey, reeling and stumbling, and asking piteously to be allowed to rest. But he changed his course now and made for the broad gateway of the Laford place.

He entered, and waded, ankle-deep, along a half-obliterated driveway. Presently, lighted windows glimmered through the snow. Then, when the rush of wind ceased for a moment, came the sound of music and laughter.

The girl was leaning on him heavily, half asleep. At the foot of the steps leading to the front door, he shook her, and made her stand straight.

"Please don't," she faltered. "Why are you so rough with me?"

"Never mind why. Do you see that flight of steps?"

"Steps?"

"Yes, right in front of you. You must go up. When you get to the top you shall rest."

He began to ascend and she went with him, lifting her feet slowly and with difficulty. Outside the door was a snowhouse. With a deep feeling of re-

lief he entered it, and was sheltered from the storm at last. He rang the doorbell and stood waiting. His companion pressed on him more and more heavily and her head slowly sank on his shoulder. He was so tired he could scarcely support her when the door was opened.

A blaze of light dazzled his eyes. When he could distinguish objects, he saw a man in livery standing in the doorway, and gazing at him in wonder. Fearing that the door might be suddenly shut, Nomanson went forward, half-carrying, half-leading Frances. When they were well inside the threshold he spoke, standing for the first time in his father's house.

"This girl is nearly frozen to death. She is an employee of Mr. Laford, and I don't suppose he would like to have her die in the street."

The servant's amazement changed to pity. He was no supercilious flunky, but a mild-mannered and kind-looking man. The pale face and limp form of the girl satisfied him that the stranger was telling the truth.

"How did the young woman come that way?" he inquired.

"She was kept late at work, and was going home. She couldn't get there in this storm. I couldn't get her there either."

"I'm sorry for the young woman, but you ought not to have brought her to the front door. You should have taken her around to the kitchen."

"This was the first door I came to, and I didn't want to do any more outside traveling. But show me the way downstairs; I'm not too proud to take

her to the kitchen. She can thaw out before the range as well as anywhere."

The man felt somewhat abashed, though he hardly knew why.

"I didn't mean nothing offensive, young man. There's a party here to-night, and I don't suppose you'd want to take the young girl into the parlor—would you, now?"

"I wouldn't."

"Well, just put her on that settee, and I'll go and speak to the missus."

Nomanson did so, and stood supporting her head while the man went for Mrs. Laford. He would have liked to seat himself, but he would not accept even that much of a favor from his father. The magnificence and luxury around him deepened his sullen hate, and the look on his face surprised the good-natured lackey when he returned.

"Mrs. Laford says, will you walk right downstairs."

The man's effort at politeness chased the scowl from Nomanson's face. He lifted Frances to her feet.

"It's only a few steps down, this time, and you shall rest as long as you like."

The girl had already partially revived, and when he raised her, she opened her half-closed eyes, and asked where she was.

"I'll tell you, presently."

The servant conducted them to a warm and well lighted room in the basement.

"Please tell me where I am," she again asked.

“ You are in Mr. Laford’s house.”

She made an effort to rise, but fell back again and covered her face with her hands.

“ Why did you bring me here? Here—of all places?”

“ Because you would have died unless I had got you under shelter, and you had a better right to come here than to any other house near by.”

“ Oh! dear! how my hands and feet hurt.” She uttered a childish sob of pain. “ If I’d only known where you were taking me I’d never have come.”

“ Don’t go and be ungrateful, young woman,” said the serving-man. “ The young man couldn’t have brought you to a better place than this. He knew what he was about, mark my words.” Then, turning to Nomanson, he added, “ This is the house-keeper’s room, and Mrs. Swift, she’s the house-keeper, she’ll be down presently, ’cause Mrs. Laford sent for her too, and she’ll look after the young woman. And Mrs. Laford is coming down herself, as soon as she can leave the company. She’s a very good lady—is the missus; and you did well to come here, young man.”

The housekeeper came presently. She was a thin little woman with gray hair and a large nose. She poured out some brandy, and was surprised and disappointed that she could not induce either of her visitors to take it.

The woman had set down the glass and was unbuttoning Frances’ cloak when Mrs. Laford entered the room.

She was dressed all in black silk, so that her tall

form seemed taller, and her white skin whiter. Nomanson admired her as he had admired the other splendid things in the house ; and he failed to notice a pair of bright eyes peering around the doorway, and a beautifully rounded arm and shoulder that for a moment appeared against the background of darkness outside.

His father's wife spoke to Nomanson graciously, and then assisted the housekeeper in making Frances comfortable. The girl was so overwhelmed by the presence of the great lady that she could say nothing, but she looked her thanks.

"This girl is not fit to go out again to-night. I will take care of her and send her home in the morning. Are you her brother?"

"No, I am no relation to her. Her aunt sent me to bring her home. I did the best I could, but she gave out, completely. I suppose the man told you why I brought her here."

"He said that you told him she was one of Mr. Laford's employees."

"Yes, and she was kept at work two hours beyond the regular time for closing."

"Indeed, and how did that happen?"

"If you will ask your son, perhaps he can tell you."

Frances had been placed on a sofa, and the housekeeper was taking off her wet shoes. She raised herself on her elbow, and exclaimed, in a voice of terror, "Please don't tell her."

Mrs. Laford understood. She was clever and quick to take a hint ; but she would not perhaps

have been able to understand so quickly, if similar cases had not previously come to her knowledge. A delicate crimson flush, half shame, half anger, overspread her face and neck. Nomanson saw that she knew.

“ You see,” he said, “ why it wouldn’t be safe for her to accept your very kind offer of keeping her here to-night.”

Elizabeth Laford’s brow contracted, and her eyes flashed.

“ Leave her in my charge and she *will* be safe.”

“ I will,” he said. “ When *you* say a thing you mean it.”

He looked at her with an admiration that sent a thrill through her; then suddenly remembering that this woman was the wife of his enemy, he turned to leave the room.

“ Are you going ? ” asked Mrs. Laford.

“ Yes, there is nothing to keep me here any longer.”

“ You need rest. I can see from your face that you are tired. Wait, and I will have some hot coffee sent down for you. I would ask you to stay too, but the girl’s friends would be worried about her, if neither of you came home.”

To Mrs. Laford’s amazement, he answered :

“ I will accept nothing from John Laford.”

She recollected then about the strange young man who had frightened Violet and angered Lillian. *She* felt neither fear nor anger. She was only interested, and curious to know why he hated her husband.

“ Why ? ”

He looked at her and considered.

“It would do you no good to know,” he said, at last.

“Perhaps it might be good for *you* to tell me.”

He laughed, and again turned to go. As he did so he saw Lillian in the doorway. Half hidden behind her was Violet.

Those two, in evening dress, were a sight well worth looking at. Lillian was all white and gold—dress, ornaments, arms, shoulders, hair; well set off by her cousin’s rose-pink drapery, shorter stature, and darker complexion. So did her quiet self-possession contrast with Violet’s half-real, half-assumed fear. She met Nomanson’s gaze calmly, but without any sign of displeasure. Then she turned to her mother and said, in French :

“Violet told me that her *bête noire* was actually in the house. I couldn’t help coming down to see if it was true.”

“How did she know?”

“She heard Charles tell you that two of the *canaille* were here, and her slumming propensities brought her down after you; but when she saw who it was she fled upstairs to me.”

“I don’t know that this is a good place for either of you.”

“Perhaps not, but won’t you let me speak to *him*? ”

“Well, you may do so, but be careful what you say.”

The subject of this dialogue stood quietly looking at the two girls. As he made another movement towards the door, Lillian spoke, pleasantly :

"It is a long while since you have seen me. Does your interest in me still continue?"

She spoke with the dignified assurance of a woman whose position was so far above his that she could, without danger of compromising herself, meet him on terms of equality.

For a moment, he was confused, but on recovering his self-possession, he said, quietly, "I suppose you want me to tell you why I stared at you in the road, that day last summer."

"I confess that I do. I thought then that it was only a piece of coarse insolence from a man who deemed it manly to outrage the feelings of women, especially those he knew were not used to that sort of treatment. Since then, I have changed my opinion, and I am curious to know what it meant. What did it mean?"

"I will tell you. Suppose somebody told you that there was a man in this town who was your father's son, and you had never seen him; you would want to see him, wouldn't you?"

"I think I would."

"Exactly so. Well, that was—"

Mrs. Laford stepped suddenly forward and interrupted him.

"Don't say any more. I know what you would say. Don't say it. Do you think it is fit for *her* to hear?"

With a grim smile he asked:

"Do you think it was fit for her father to *do*?"

But he had gone too far already. Lillian shrank back from the doorway with a look of horror.

He stepped forward. Violet darted out of sight.

"Good-bye, my sister," he said, mockingly, as he passed. She followed him with her eyes. When he had gone, Violet heaved a sigh of relief.

The housekeeper was taking off the wet stockings of the half unconscious girl. Neither of these gave any sign of having understood what had just passed.

Mrs. Laford, in a low tone, said to her daughter and niece :

"Remember, girls, not a word of this is to be repeated. I cannot tell you how sorry I am that it ever happened. Don't talk of it even to each other. Now we had better go upstairs."

Nomanson never knew just how he got home that night. It seemed to him afterwards like a nightmare. He remembered fighting his way through the storm as far as the bridge, with a dogged determination not to be cheated out of his revenge by death; but from that time until he found himself before the stove in Mrs. Smith's dining room, with the good lady rubbing his hands, all was a blank. But she told him afterwards that the first words he said as he staggered into the house were, "Frances is safe."

Ten hours later, Frances was sent home. Her first words to her aunt were broken by sobs :

"Oh! Aunty, I'm so sorry. I've lost my place."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THERE had been war in the three cities for two months. On the morning after that momentous game of *écarté* in which, all unknown to himself, Nomanson had figured as the prize, the allied forces of France and Russia had entered upon their preparations for the siege with a prudence, deliberation, foresight and vigor that would have been no discredit to a Vauban or a Todleben.

First the munitions of war had to be supplied, and here they were fortunate at the outset. Élise was a milliner by trade, and Vera, a dressmaker. Therefore, at very small cost of time or money, Miss Larose had gone forth arrayed in all the panoply of war, as ordinarily waged by her sex.

Then had come a series of carefully planned and well-conducted operations, some of which have been already described in detail. But the enemy's citadel seemed to be stronger than a Sebastopol. Mines, well and skillfully laid, had been sprung under its very walls; but when the smoke cleared away, the ramparts were standing, and the garrison remained apparently undisturbed. Nor did hot and persistent bombardments, and dashing (while cleverly masked) assaults have any greater effect.

What would have been the final result of those operations is not now worth conjecture; the campaign was brought to an end by the beginning of

another in which real bullets flew and real blood was spilt.

On the first of May there began one of those struggles between labor and capital, that, always beginning with loud professions of respect for personal rights, invariably end in an appeal to personal violence. The strife extended from the Canada line to the gulf, and from ocean to ocean, and the scene of this story was one of its most hotly contested battlefields.

Towards the middle of May the summer heat began, and the swarms of unemployed men who loitered about the streets selected the river bank as a favorite lounging place, because it was rather cooler there. On the North bridge, Nomanson met Elise, one cloudless morning, who rushed towards him, with a copy of the *Firebrand*.

“Ah!” she cried. “You say we Anarchists *do* nothing. Look at this. What did I tell you? Read!”

The news was that in a city not far from New Manchester, unemployed workmen had been attacked by police, and that an unknown hand had thrown a dynamite bomb, killing and wounding eleven of the assailants.

“Well,” she said, when he had finished reading, “what do you say now?”

“What I’ve been saying always: what does all this amount to? Thousands of men, an ocean of talk; one who has nerve enough to strike a blow. All the rest run like sheep. They will probably find the man who dared to strike and hang him. Then

it will be twenty years before another will be found with courage to do the same thing."

"There is to be a meeting to-night at the club-room. Come. You will hear something, this time, that will mean action."

He found a squad of police at the door of the club that night, and learned that Pulaski and Rothmann were in jail, accused of inciting to riot a meeting the day before.

Anarchy was no longer to lift its head unmolested. The newspaper cry about its harmlessness if let alone was silenced. It was hated, feared, denounced, but no longer ridiculed.

The fact that Anarchist meetings had to be held in secrecy gave them a new interest. Nomanson attended several and found everything as before. Denunciations, threats, but no coherent plan of action. He grew weary of it again.

By the end of June, both parties had had all the strike they wanted, and more. The men were in need of wages,—the masters of labor. Still neither side would yield.

Nomanson was in comparatively easy circumstances. Having no wife or children, no vices or extravagances, he had saved enough for a few weeks' board. All the other unemployed men in the house where he lived were in debt.

As the distress increased the obstinacy grew more stubborn. The strike widened. Two factories were still running, but they were small and unimportant. The railroads were almost paralyzed. Two or three trains a day were permitted to run, but their crews

worked in peril of their lives. The cloud of smoke that generally hung over the city was gone.

At last, the manufacturers determined on desperate measures. One morning, before daybreak, a train came in very quietly bringing a swarm of Italians. They were taken through the town by a roundabout way, to a row of vacant cottages owned by John Laford.

Great was the fury of the strikers and their sympathizers when this was reported. A mob surrounded the Italians' quarters, but committed no riotous act.

Early the next morning, the mayor waited on Laford, and informed him that unless the Italians were withdrawn he could not promise to maintain order. Laford answered very pertinently, that it was his duty to keep order. The mayor was aware of that but doubted his ability.

The Italians started to go to work next morning, and were driven back by a howling mob. Laford waited on the mayor and demanded that the peace be maintained. The mayor replied by deploring the strained relations between the manufacturers and their workmen, and intimating that a settlement of the difficulty would be much better than a resort to force. Laford declared that unless his workmen were protected, he would engage Pinkerton men. The mayor said that if this was done he would not be responsible for the consequences. Laford declared that *he* was not responsible. If the mob would let his men alone, the men would not molest the strikers. If they chose to begin the attack, their blood be on their own heads. The mayor begged

him to remember how obnoxious the Pinkerton men were to the people. Laford answered sarcastically that he thought the people were quite as obnoxious to the Pinkerton men.

At last, the mayor consented to call out the militia. The Thirty-third had been under arms all day, greatly to the distress of doting mothers and wives. It slept at the armory that night, and next morning, two companies, commanded by the lieutenant-colonel, were ordered to the City Hall. The mayor met them there, and drove to the scene of action, the soldiers following. A great crowd was waiting in front of the Italian quarters. The mayor read the riot act, and made a speech, in which he expressed his sympathy with the people, but commanded them to disperse. He then returned to the City Hall, leaving the lieutenant-colonel to escort the Italians to the factory.

This was successfully accomplished, for the strikers were, for the time being, overawed by the soldiers. In the evening, the laborers returned home under the same escort.

While Nomanson was at dinner that evening, one of the boarders announced that the militia had been called out. He was instantly on his feet. He asked a few eager questions to assure himself of the correctness of the news; then, leaving his dessert untouched, he started for Iron City. As he forced his way through the excited throngs he paid no heed to the angry references and muttered threats concerning the militiamen and the Italians. He was making his way to the storm-centre.

He found the people thicker and angrier when he had crossed the bridge. He was forced to take to the middle of the street. At *Ætna Hall*, from a truck, with four flaring torches, an orator was haranguing a dense mass of people. The hall itself was brilliantly lighted, and full to the door.

"It's reached the highest point," he said to himself. "It can't go any higher. To-morrow the reaction may come on;—I must strike while the iron is hot."

There was some difficulty in making his way inside, but he pushed through and succeeded. The hall was intensely hot, though the windows were open. Some men near the door were smoking, although placards on the wall forbade it. The smell of smoke could not neutralize that greasy odor that goes with a crowd of people who eat, sleep, and cook in the same place. He was well used to the heat and the smells, and the carbonic acid gas; and in his pre-occupation scarcely noticed them. Quietly and persistently he made his way to the platform, and waited for the speaker to finish.

The orator denounced capital and called on his hearers to stand up for their rights, all in the usual way. He deprecated violence, which brought the cause of labor into disrepute.

Suddenly Nomanson mounted the steps of the platform. Turning to the audience, he interrupted the speaker in a voice that rang through the hall, and brought the loungers in the vestibule to the doors.

"Men, you know that's all nonsense. If it wasn't for violence no strike would ever succeed. If it

wasn't that the scabs are *afraid* to go to work, all the factories in the town would be running now. You know it, and I know it, and he knows it; and any one could feel, when he was telling you not to fight for your freedom, that his heart wasn't in his words. You know that the militia have been called out, and that the dagoes will go to work to-morrow under guard of two lines of rifles. If they do, our cause is lost. But if I can get half a dozen men to stand by me, they won't. Now then, are there six men here who are not afraid of anything?" (He stamped his foot furiously). "Mind, I mean just what I say. Not afraid of anything—of anything!"

There was a silence, and then a murmur. A man behind him said, "See here, young fellow, you hadn't ought to disturb the meeting this way."

Nomanson turned and gave him a look of scorn. Then to the crowd :

"A man here tells me not to disturb the meeting. Well, I'm going in a minute. There are at least four hundred men here. Perhaps four out of that four hundred are the kind I want. If there are four men here that have the grit to risk their lives with me, let them follow me outside. The rest, I don't want. They can stay here and listen to this gentleman. But perhaps you want to know what I propose to do, before you go in with me. Well, here it is :

"To-morrow John Laford is going to send eight hundred dagoes to work in his factories. The Thirty-third regiment is to guard them. I don't need to tell you that, for you all know it.

"Now, I don't intend that those dagoes shall go to work."

A hoarse murmur arose that died away almost instantly.

"If you want to know how I intend to prevent them from going to work, this is how. I don't intend that either of those two factories shall be there to-morrow morning."

The murmur came this time louder and longer.

"I intend that those two factories shall be burnt or blown up before morning. If you want to have a hand in the business come along."

He stepped down, and walked to the door, the people making way for him. When he had passed, men began to follow him. The movement increased. When he had passed down the outer steps of the hall, and turned for the first time to look behind him, many were pressing after him. As he stopped, they surrounded him. He saw several familiar faces. Men of the factory and the rifle club were there.

He was astonished at the effect of his words. At first, he scarcely knew what to do.

The numbers about him increased every moment. Suddenly, he laughed, and said: "You're more than I bargained for, but never mind, I'll take you all. Come on."

He moved off in the direction of the rifle club. By the time he reached the door of the club, he had nearly two hundred followers.

Stamm was among those who were nearest. He called him:

"Hello! I'm glad to see you. I've got some-

thing for you to do. Go around to the grocery store and get two or three barrels of kerosene. Get some dynamite cartridges if you can. Here's money to pay for them. We're honest men and don't take anything without paying for it; but we'll just borrow that cart on the other side of the street. The owner won't mind if we bring it back safe. Some of you fellows take hold and haul it around to the store."

There was a rush, and as many men and boys as could get hold at once seized it. This obscure young workman had suddenly become a leader of men—this shabby youth without a coat had only to give the word, and a dozen men sprang to obey.

He entered the house and they pressed in after him, and swarmed up into the meeting room. He lighted a lamp, and went to the door of the armory, a very small room, but large enough to hold the armament of the club, seven rifles, all told.

He designated six men whom he knew to go in with him, and told the rest to remain outside and they obeyed.

He distributed the rifles, taking one himself; with what cartridges there were, about forty rounds. Then, telling the little band of armed men to keep close to him he returned to the main room.

The lamps had been lighted by that time and shone over a tumultuous mass of tossing heads. Through the confused babel of voices, one that he knew well reached his ears.

"Ah! ce'st tu, mon brave, embracez moi, mon pétroleur!"

Elise Larose rushed towards him. Before he knew what she meant to do she had flung her arms around him and kissed him on both cheeks. In another instant, his hand was grasped by the Russian girl, while Ardetti slapped him on the shoulder, crying "Here I am. Go on. I follow you to hell."

Those who heard this sentiment shouted in approval, and hats flew into the air. Suddenly a happy thought struck Elise.

"*Les drapeaux*," she cried. "*Pour moi, le drapeau rouge. Allons.*"

In less than half a minute the two women had pulled down the two flags, and were on the table. They waved the flags; the mob waved their hats and shouted till the building shook. Then it became known that Nomanson had gone down to the street and they surged after him like a great mass of damned-up water fretting through a narrow sluice.

In the street was Stamm with the cart and the kerosene; and he carried under his arm with great care a strongly-bound oblong box.

With a great noise of feet and voices, the mob went down the street. First, came a scattering handful of ragged street urchins, looking back in open-mouthed admiration; then, the coatless young commander; next the female color-bearers, after them the little bodyguard; finally the swarm of rioters. Windows were opened, and heads thrust out, while hundreds gathered on the sidewalks to watch them go by. Fresh accessions swelled the mob continually. A dozen men with kerosene torches joined in. Half a dozen others with guns attached themselves to the

little band of riflemen. One of them, a boy of fourteen, had a toy rifle ; others had shot guns and old-fashioned muskets.

The sky was black. Just as they reached the South bridge, a flash of lightning lit up the brick arches and the sluggish current. Then came a roll of thunder.

Elise laughed joyously.

“Aha, you make big noise, old man up in the sky ; but we make more, before long.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

AT the central police station of New Manchester, two men were seated in armchairs. One wore the uniform of a roundsman, the other, of a doorkeeper. The roundsman was whistling softly, and the doorman was jingling his keys in time to the other's music which was suddenly cut short.

The telephone bell rang, furiously.

Both men started. The roundsman sprang to his feet, and went to the telephone.

“Hello.”

“Hello. Is that the central office?”

“Yes.”

“Is Captain Conway there?”

“No. He's gone down to the mass-meeting at River Street, near the bridge. We got a message they were smashin' winders there, an' raisin' Cain generly; so he took the reserve, and went down there.”

“Who is this?”

“Roundsman Hill.”

“Oh! Did the captain take all the reserve?”

“Yes. I'm the only man here besides the doorman.”

The man at the other end of the telephone uttered a profane expression.

“Who are *you*?” inquired Hill.

"I'm Captain Ridge of the Iron City Police. We've just been informed that a mob is crossing to New Manchester to blow up Laford's factories with dynamite."

Then it was the roundsman's turn to swear.

The voice from Iron City came again.

"You'd better send for the captain, right away. The mob must be over the bridge by this time."

"All right. I'll do what I can. Thank you. Good-bye."

The roundsman stood for a moment, his honest blue eyes gazing straight ahead. The doorman asked him what his message was, but got no reply. Suddenly he turned to the instrument again, and rang the bell, violently.

"Hello, central."

"Hello."

"I want the Thirty-third Regiment Armory."

While he was telling the doorman the news the bell rang.

"Hello."

"Hello. Is that the Thirty-third Regiment Armory?"

"Yes. Who are you?"

"I'm Roundsman Hill, of the police. Who is that?"

"Sergeant Robinson, of the Thirty-third."

"Is the colonel there?"

"No."

"Where is he?"

"He and the lieutenant-colonel have gone to the mayor's office. The mayor sent his carriage for the

colonel, and wanted to see him particularly. The colonel asked the lieutenant-colonel to go along. They both went, about half an hour ago."

"Who's in command?"

"The major."

"I'd like to see him."

"All right."

Presently the bell rang again. Meanwhile the officer had been pacing up and down like a tiger in a cage.

"Hello."

"Hello."

"Is that the police officer?"

"Yes, I'm Roundsman Hill. Is that the major?"

"Yes. What do you want?"

"I've just got word from the Iron City chief of police that there's a mob coming over the river to blow up the Laford works. Captain Conway and all our reserves have gone to stop a riot down by the Turnpike bridge. I'm here at the central office alone. Can you send some of your men to protect the factory?"

After a pause, the answer came.

"I don't know whether I have authority to do that. I think I'll have to get orders from my superiors for such a serious step as that. I'll send to the City Hall right away."

"But, major, I'm afraid if you delay it'll be too late to save the factory. The chief of police over the river says the crowd is on this side already."

"I think I'll have to get the orders of my superior officers before I can send any of the men away from

the armory. Besides, I doubt whether the militia can be legally used as a guard to protect private property. I can't take the responsibility anyhow."

"Will you telephone to the colonel?"

"Yes, right away."

"I'm going after the captain, Jo," he said. "I'll leave you in charge here. I've done all I could, and if the place is blown up, it ain't my fault," and he started.

When the first of these conversations over the telephone was beginning, the last of the mob had crossed the bridge. By the time they were ended the foremost of the mob were in sight of the doomed building.

When Nomanson reached the door of the factory, he called out:

"Here! some fellow with an axe or pickaxe open the door."

A stalwart workman with a pickaxe stepped forward. Half a dozen thundering blows and the door went in.

"Now then, those of you that understand dynamite and petroleum, get in your work. And some of you go and make sure that all the people in the houses around here get out of the way."

Ardetti and Stamm carried the wooden boxes into the factory; Vera followed them with a lantern; Elise and half a dozen men rolled in the cart, with the barrel of kerosene.

By the light of the lantern, those outside could see the dim gigantic forms of the machinery, until they disappeared in the darkness above. Below, the

dark figures of the Anarchists were busy. The dynamite cartridges were taken out of the boxes and laid on the floor and the barrel taken out of the cart. Élise ran to the door, got an axe and knocked in the head of the barrel. Then Stamm upset it, and the oil spread in rivulets over the wooden floor.

The men came out and dragged the cart up the street. Ardetti and Stamm came and started after them. Vera held up her lantern and looked around her. Then she also left the building. Élise, with her long black hair down on one side, came to the threshold.

“Look out,” she cried, “get out of the way, all of you. I set off the fire right away.”

There was a sudden division in the crowd, some running up the street and some down. Nomanson walked slowly, and a few followed his example.

When he had reached what he thought a safe distance, he stopped and turned just in time to see Élise stooping down with a spark of fire in her hand. There was a flash from the ground, and she came running towards him, her hair streaming behind. Vera caught his arm.

“Farther back,” she cried. “You are nearer than any one. It is not safe.”

He retreated a few steps. The Frenchwoman reached them, panting. The windows of the factory were beginning to glow, and black smoke came from the open door. Far down the street, a few waving torches above a dark, agitated mass showed where half of the mob were awaiting the issue.

Suddenly, the front wall of the factory toppled and fell outward into the street. He felt the ground tremble under his feet ;—then a tremendous report, as if all the cannon in a battery had been discharged, not quite but almost, together ; followed by a prolonged rattle, and a dense cloud of black smoke. Dead silence ; now a confused sound of human voices.

* * * * *

The captain of police, hurrying to the rescue with his reserve, eleven men all told, heard the explosion and stopped.

“We’re too late,” he said.

The sky was lit up by an electric flash, and the police saw the thick mass of smoke rising and spreading. When their eyes had become accustomed to the darkness again, they perceived a dull, red glow in the same place.

“They’ve set the place afire,” said the captain. “Here, Mike, go and notify the fire department ; run, now. Come on the rest of you.”

* * * * *

The colonel of militia, rattling along the boulevard in the mayor’s carriage, on his way to the armory, heard the explosion and swore. Then he shouted to the driver to go faster.

At the door of the armory, Victor Laford ran towards him.

“Oh! Colonel!” he exclaimed, “can’t I take a company and go and protect the other factory. This thing is going to ruin my father.”

The colonel drew himself up and answered, "Sir, listen to me. I am going to take four companies, and wipe these scoundrels off the face of the earth. I don't care if all the laws in the United States of America and the state of Illinois forbid me to lift a finger in the matter. I have had enough, sir, of riots; and I have had enough of His Honor, the Mayor. The last thing the mayor said to me, sir, was that he would regret any collision between the military and the people. Well, sir, he can regret as much as he wants to. I am going to wipe those scoundrels off the face of the earth, sir; off the face of the earth!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ladies of the Laford family dined alone that evening. Victor was at the armory and the head of the house had gone to attend a meeting of mill-owners, called to take measures for the protection of property in case of riot. None of the ladies had much appetite, and, as the meal was eaten almost in silence, it was soon over. Then they went out on the piazza to get what little coolness there was in the air. They had "dressed for dinner" as usual, but even Mrs. Laford, prudent matron that she was, did not think it worth while to have any wraps brought out.

For some time they reclined in their low chairs without saying a word. Then Mrs. Laford introduced the subject of dressmaking. Strange to say, the young ladies took only a languid interest, and the conversation soon flagged. Lillian then began to speak of the Church Guild meeting next week, which fared no better than her mother's scheme.

Mrs. Laford thought she would give a garden party next week. This stirred Violet to express the hope that Frank Briarly would not be there. Mrs. Laford thought he would have to be asked. Violet declared that if he came she would have a bad headache, that was all. Mrs. Laford hoped that she would not be so foolish; and again the conversation ceased.

After a while, Violet broke the silence by saying, passionately, "I wish I was out of this horrid place."

"Why?" inquired her aunt.

"Why! because I don't think it's safe. I do wish we'd gone before those dreadful creatures on the C. & W. struck. And like as not the trains on the Central will be stopped by to-morrow. If they're not, I think it will be a sin to miss the last chance we may have of getting away before the whole place is burned over our heads."

"Don't be extravagant, my dear. Your uncle John assured me yesterday that there was not the slightest danger of violence, except to non-union workmen."

"Well, I may be very foolish, but I really *am* afraid."

After thinking for awhile, Mrs. Laford said, "I don't know but that it might be well for you two girls to visit your aunt Susan. You know you have been promising for some time."

"Dreadful old thing," muttered Violet. "Still, she's better than these wretches here."

"You think them more dangerous than a dragon," said Lillian.

"It isn't kind to speak of your aunt in that way, my dears. You know she is a good woman, and she loves both of you. She *is* a little old-fashioned and strait-laced, but that is a good fault, in these times especially. And you know she moves in the very best society."

"Yes, the very best, but stupid—Oh! my! I didn't think even Philadelphia could show up such a slow set. However, I'm ready to go there or anywhere. What do you say, Lil?"

“I should prefer not to go.”

“Oh, pshaw! don’t be mean. Why not?”

“I don’t like to run away from my mother and father and brother.”

“Stuff and nonsense. Nobody ever expects girls to stay where there’s danger.”

“I expect myself to stay.”

“I don’t really think that you are under any obligation to stay, my dear,” said Mrs. Laford. “I will see that your father and Victor are made comfortable, and as you are going to make your aunt a visit anyhow, I see no reason why you should not go now.”

“Will you go with us, if we go? You know Auntie will be delighted to see you.”

“Oh! no, my daughter, I must stay at home and look after your father and Victor.”

“I hardly think that is necessary. Maria and the rest of the servants will make them comfortable.”

“My dear, the thing is impossible. Suppose—something—should happen—to Victor.”

Lillian was silenced, but no further attempt was made to induce her to agree to an escape from the threatened danger.

Some time passed. Then Violet rose restlessly, and walked to the end of the piazza. She was gazing intently towards the northwest. Then she called to them in a voice of intense excitement:

“Oh! Auntie, Lily; come here. The sky over there is all red. There must be a fire.”

They sprang up and went quickly—Violet’s extended arm was pointing towards the sky ablaze with an angry red glow.

“It’s a fire, certainly,” said Mrs. Laford.

“It’s on our side of the river, too,” said Lillian.

“Listen,” gasped Violet.

A feeble wind had sprung up, and the trees were rustling faintly. As the breeze came a little stronger both Mrs. Laford and Lillian heard a sound louder than the sound of the leaves—a hoarse murmur,—unmistakably the voices of men.

As Lillian listened her blood thrilled in her veins. Yet when she spoke, it was with perfect coolness—almost languid indifference.

“There must be a great many people at the fire.”

“I should say so,” cried Violet. “Good gracious ! Auntie, Lily, don’t you understand ? It’s just as I said. Those fiends are beginning to set fire to the town. Oh ! dear ! what *shall* we do ? What *shall* we do ? ”

“Be calm, Violet. Do be calm,” said Mrs. Laford. “There is not the slightest reason for being alarmed. A fire has broken out, and a crowd has collected around it ; that is all. Very likely they are assisting the firemen.”

“Assisting the fire, more likely. Oh ! Lily, don’t stand there in that provoking way. Do think of some way for us to get away from here, quick. I’m so frightened my head is all in a whirl, and they may be here any minute. Are you going to stand there like a stone image until they come and roast you alive ? ”

“Violet, my dear,” exclaimed Mrs. Laford. “Do calm yourself. You are in danger of hysterics if you go on in this way. Believe me there is no danger.”

Violet's first paroxysm of fear was passing away. She was not really any less terrified than before, but a physical reaction had set in. She leaned heavily against a pillar, her face pale and her bosom heaving, but when she spoke it was in an even voice.

"When they do come, *he* will be one of them; the first one, probably."

"He? Who do you mean?"

"That dreadful man. *You* know."

Mrs. Laford made no answer but she understood. In the silence, the noise of voices came louder.

Violet's voice sunk lower, almost to a whisper.

"He is there, and he'll bring them here."

There was something in the quiet intenseness with which she spoke that impressed the older woman far more than her former violent excitement. Calm as she was, Elizabeth Laford felt her heart leap. She was vexed with herself for being discomposed, and spoke with a sharpness quite unusual in her:

"Come, my dear, we really must have no more of this. You will certainly make yourself ill. Lillian, I think you had better take Violet upstairs. Give her some bromide and try to get her to sleep. And to-morrow, Violet, you shall go to Philadelphia."

The hot blood rushed to Violet's face, and she answered angrily:

"Go to bed! I will not. Aunt Bessie, you've no right to treat me like a child. I won't be treated like a child. But just wait. Half an hour from now, you'll wish you'd listened to me."

"A genuine little Cassandra," said Lillian, smiling.

Violet walked away to the other end of the piazza.

She looked at the sky to the northeast, but saw no sign of a fire. Then she came to the others. Again the evening breeze brought the sound of voices; now more like a roar than a murmur.

Violet was trembling from head to foot. The other two made no sign, but their inward composure was no longer undisturbed.

Violet spoke with chattering teeth.

“They’re coming fast. They must be running.”

Mrs. Laford went to her, wound her arms around her, and drew her close. She hid her face in her aunt’s bosom and sobbed convulsively. Mrs. Laford spoke to her in a soothing voice.

“Don’t be frightened, my precious child, you shall not be hurt so long as I can stand between you and danger. But really there *is* no danger. These people do sometimes burn factories and murder non-union workmen, but they never hurt unprotected women. We are not in South America or Asia. American workmen respect women.”

Violet nestled her wet cheek against her aunt’s firm, warm flesh, and seemed to grow quieter. Her sobs gradually ceased; though the noise of the crowd, at intervals, seemed to wax louder.

“Auntie,” she said, after a while, lifting her head, and speaking in a subdued tone; “don’t you think we had better go and hide somewhere before they come? Even if they don’t intend to hurt us, it will be better to be out of their way.”

“But we don’t know that they’re coming here, my darling. Very likely they won’t even pass the house.”

"Where shall we hide?" inquired Lillian, "under the bed, or in the closet?"

Violet released herself from her aunt's embrace.

"You know I don't mean any such absurdity. But we might go out through the kitchen garden to the lane, and so keep out of their way."

"But we don't know which way they're coming. We might run right into them," objected Mrs. Laford.

"Yes, we do know. The wind is from the west, and we heard them at first only when the wind blew, so they must be somewhere over towards the boulevard."

The older woman was silent. Her objection was answered; in fact, the girl's advice seemed not by any means unwise. It would certainly be prudent to get out of the way of a possible danger, and she could not deny to herself that there might be some risk.

But Elizabeth Laford was a proud woman, and she scorned the idea of being ignominiously hunted out of her own house and through her own grounds by a mob of factory hands. It might do for the two girls, but not for her.

"I think," she began, "that you two had better go and put on street dresses. No one is likely to come here to-night, and——"

She was cut short. Her niece suddenly pointed to the road, and uttered a sharp cry.

"Look! look! there they are."

Through the trees and shrubbery, lights could be seen moving along St. Joseph's Place, glimmering

with a reddish yellow glow in the white glare from the electric lights above.

When those is the lead came opposite the gate there was a halt and some apparent wavering in the crowd; but not for long. They turned in and advanced towards the house.

With a shuddering cry Violet turned and darted into the house. The others hastened to the door. They saw the white-clad figure disappearing through the back door leading into the garden.

“Quick, Lillian, follow her.”

“And leave you here alone?”

“Yes.”

“With all those rioters coming?”

“Certainly.”

“Do you suppose I am going to do such a thing?”

“You *must*. I am able to take care of myself. That half-frantic child is not. I don’t need you. She does. Quick, or you will be too late to catch her. If so, Heaven knows what will happen to her.—Go!”

The mother raised her arm and pointed to the door.

Lillian Laford had always been too proud not to be docile. It was fifteen years since she had disobeyed her mother. Besides she knew that her mother was right. Only a moment’s hesitation; then, with a quick movement, she caught up her trailing skirts, and started in pursuit.

With a long sigh of relief, her mother turned to face the mob. She saw the torches already half way across the lawn, and beneath them the black mass of

shadowy figures. With a pang of regret, she witnessed the trampling over her cherished flower beds. There was an irregular fringe of scattered forms in front of the main body, mostly those of half-grown boys. As the mass came on, these shrank a little until they were swallowed up in the main body that surged up to the foot of the piazza steps.

The lady of the house stood above them erect, her head slightly lifted ; one hand resting lightly on the upper post of the carved railing. She was not at all afraid. She had always been accustomed to deference from these people, and it scarcely seemed possible to her that they could carry their presumption much farther.

CHAPTER XXVI.

When Nomanson started away from the burning factory, the greater part of the crowd followed him, though some stayed to watch the flames. They swarmed on along James Street until they reached St. Joseph's Place.

Here one of them stopped and lifted up his voice. He was a fiery-eyed, fiery-haired Anarchist; Bohemian by birth and answered to the name of Lieckiowitz. He had a tremendous voice, and was sometimes employed at open-air meetings as a speaker, when none better could be had.

The crowd was in a mischievous humor, and threats of various kinds were heard on all sides. Most of them were more or less ironical; such as, "Burn the whole town." . . . "Let's blow up the armory." . . . "What's the matter with John Laford?" . . . "We want him to get off the earth, that's all." But other suggestions were more practical in their nature; and some windows were smashed, and gates were wrenched off their hinges as the throng swept past.

So when Lieckiowitz's bellow rose above the general uproar, proposing that Laford's house should be served in the same way as his factory, it struck a responsive chord in a hundred breasts; and when he started along St. Joseph's Place, he had the tide with him.

Nomanson knew nothing of this diversion for some minutes. He noticed that there was less noise in his rear, but the difference was not marked enough to attract his special attention. Intent on the destruction of the Thompson Street factory, he continued on his way, until a ragged boy, eager to tell an important piece of news to so distinguished a character, pressed through the crowd and shouted in his ear, "Hey, Boss, do you know that there's a big gang of the fellows gone to burn John Laford's house?"

Nomanson stopped.

"How do you know? Who said they were going there?"

"I seen 'em. They was all hollerin' it."

"How long ago?"

"'Bout fifteen minutes. They all come along as far as St. Jo's. Place. But they didn't come no further this way. They went off along St. Jo's Place, a-hollerin' and a-yellin' they was goin' to burn John Laford's house."

The crowd immediately around him had stopped when he did. He turned to them.

"Go ahead, and finish the factory. I'll join you as soon as I can. I've got to settle this business first."

He waited for no answer, but went off on a run. A hundred men followed; half of them running for their lives, believing that soldiers or the police were in pursuit.

Nomanson's legs were strong, and his heart action good, so that he not only kept well ahead of the rest, but distanced most of them. Perhaps a score of them

kept near him as he cut diagonally across the half-empty lots between him and the Laford house.

Those who had not started to run, made no move in any other direction. Presently Elise turned to Vera, speaking, as usual, in French :

“ Well, my friend, what shall we do ? Shall we go on or go after him ? ”

“ Where is he going, think you ? ”

“ To Laford’s house, without doubt.”

“ And for what ? ”

The Frenchwoman shrugged her shoulders.

“ To see it burn, I suppose. You know how he hates Laford. That is all he cares about. The Cause is nothing to him. He does not care that for it.” She snapped her fingers.

“ Well, and what then ? ”

“ He uses us as instruments against the man he hates. Very good, we use him as an instrument in the cause we love. We are even then, is it not so ? ”

“ That is granted, and what then ? The people are listening to us and expecting some action from us. Come, then. Shall we do as he said, or not ? ”

“ As he said. We play his game and in so doing, our own. He has played it well so far, and we shall only confuse it by going contrary to him. Forward, then.”

She flourished her red banner, and once more the throng was in motion.

Thus, it happened, that when Mrs. Laford saw the foremost of the mob at the foot of her piazza steps, Nomanson and a handful of followers were almost at the gate.

The greater part of the mob came to a halt on reaching the piazza. Some ascended the steps and stood on them, others climbed on the railing; and half a dozen, over it. But all kept a certain respectful distance from the imposing figure in white, that seeming to be waiting to hear what explanation they might have to offer for this unwarrantable intrusion.

The explanation was presently offered by Lieckiwitz. Standing with one foot on the top step, he flourished his hand towards the road, and spoke with a strong foreign accent.

“Madam, you better go way from here pooty quick, 'cause we go burn dis houze.”

“Burn this house! Indeed! And what for, pray?”

“Vat for? For dis. You husband, he is the vorkingman's enemy. Ve burn his factory, and ve burn his houze, to gif him a lesson. Dat's vy.”

Mrs. Laford smiled.

“Certainly, if my husband doesn't profit by such a lesson as that, it won't be because it isn't severe enough.”

Lieckiwitz made no answer, in fact he did not exactly understand. He had expected this woman to retreat, to weep, to fall in a swoon,—anything else but to indulge in what seemed to be an American form of pleasantry. He was non-plussed; so much so that he simply stood and waited to hear what she had to say next. The rabble was waiting for some action on the part of their leader.

Elizabeth Laford dismissed the smile and proceeded:

“You are very much mistaken in saying that my

husband is the enemy of the workingman. But, granting that he is, I don't think there is any one here who believes that *I* am. I think everyone that knows me will bear witness that I have always been the friend of the working people."

"You're right, they will, ma'am," answered a voice. "And don't you think we came here to hurt you. Not a hair o' your head shall be hurt, whatever's done."

Mrs. Laford turned towards the speaker.

"Thank you, my friend, but I didn't need your information to know that I was entirely safe personally. I haven't such a poor opinion of American workingmen as to believe otherwise. I am sure that I myself am in no danger. But still, I must say that I do not think that you are treating me fairly. It is true that this house belongs to my husband, but that is the same thing as belonging to me. The fact that he has offended you does not justify you in burning the house I live in, and turning me and my daughter homeless into the street."

There was a confused sound from the assembly that seemed to indicate a wavering of purpose, although she could hear nothing articulate. Lieckowitz stood glaring, but did nothing. She returned his gaze calmly, and went on:

"You say that Mr. Laford is the enemy of the workingmen. But if he should burn your houses, and make your wives and children homeless, I think you would all of you be somewhat astonished."

A hoarse voice shouted:

"He's done just as bad. He's as good as took the

bread out of our mouths; bringin' dagoes here to take our places in the mills."

Mrs. Laford knew the working people too well to attempt any argument on this subject. She quietly evaded it.

"What arrangements Mr. Laford chooses to make as to the carrying on of his business, is not the question. I say that I, and every other woman in America, have a right to remain unmolested in our own homes."

Again came the voice from the mob:

"Your husband has brought dagoes here to take our places in the mills, and that means puttin' out o' their own homes lots o' women as good as you are."

Lieckiowitz was no leader. He had gained a fictitious leadership because he happened to propose what the mob wanted to do, and led the way. But he had no more power to control the instinct of destruction that he had set in motion than a cork has to control the waves on which it rides. The wave seemed to have cast him ashore and to be receding; in fact, he was overawed himself by the woman who stood before him, and was wavering in his own purpose, when the voice from the crowd gave him and the rest fresh impetus.

There was a savage roar from the mob, and a forward surge that sent the men on the steps a yard higher. Lieckiowitz turned to them:

"Vell den, how long ve shtand here, eh? Gif me von of dem torches, und I set de houze afire myself."

Elizabeth Laford stepped forward and raised her

hand in remonstrance. But before she could speak, her attention was attracted by a commotion in the throng. A man without a coat was forcing his way through. If the rioters had recognized him they would probably have made way for him, but they did not expect him, so he had to make his own way by sheer force.

He got through at last and pushed his way up the steps. She saw that he carried a rifle. Lieckiwitz drew back the hand he had stretched out for a torch. The newcomer reached the top step and Mrs. Laford recognized him.

“You!” she exclaimed.

He made no answer. His chest heaving, for he was “blown” by his run and his struggle to get through the mob.

She felt that she had a right to be angry with this man. She did not regard him at all as a common factory hand. She considered him responsible for his own acts.

“I thought that *you* were more of a man than to engage in such an outrage as this.”

He spoke then, with some difficulty.

“You thought right.”

He brought the butt of his rifle heavily to the floor and turned to the mob. They had recognized him by this time, and when they saw that he wanted to speak, they became quiet.

“I understand that you fellows came here to burn this house.”

No one answered

“Before you do anything of that kind, I’d like to

tell you what happened here last winter. You remember the blizzard night? Well, I was out that night with a girl, a poor working girl. She worked in the factory over there. I went to bring her home, because the snow was a foot deep and her aunt thought she couldn't get home alone. We didn't either of us have any carriage."

A roar of laughter told that the feeble witticism had struck home.

"Well, we had to foot it, and the girl was half frozen. I thought she was going to die. She would have died if I hadn't brought her—here. To this house.

"This woman took the poor working girl in, cared for her as if she had been her own daughter, brought her back to life, and sent her safe home next day.

"Now, I don't know what you say, but I say that this house ought to be sacred to every workingman as long as it stands."

There was a thunder of applause. As it subsided, a voice shouted: "Three cheers for Mrs. Laford."

A tremendous uproar ensued. Lieckiwick had disappeared. The real leader had taken his place.

"And now boys, don't let's waste any more time here. Remember, we have another factory to attend to to-night; unless we want to see dagoes running it to-morrow."

He lifted his rifle preparatory to going down the steps. Elizabeth Laford stepped forward and held out her hand. Her eyes were glistening, and she was trembling. Now that the danger was over, she realized what the nervous strain had been.

"Let me thank you for this, and ask your forgiveness for thinking what I did."

He turned towards her, but did not accept her outstretched hand. In the glare of the torches, the shadow cast by the rim of his hat hid the upper part of his face, but she could see that his mouth was set hard.

"Do you know that I have just set fire to your husband's factory on James Street?"

She was too much surprised to speak.

"—And that I have sent several hundred men over to the Thompson Street factory, to burn that?"

Still she could say nothing. The rejected hand dropped to her side.

"If the soldiers are called out (and I don't see how they can help it) I am going to kill your son, if I can."

Her eyes sank to the floor. She put out her hand and steadied herself by the railing. She heard his last words as in a dream.

"I hate John Laford, and this night's work is my doing, but I won't see the cause of the people disgraced by such a thing as they were going to do here. I want no thanks from any one who bears the name of Laford," and he left her.

In an instant a change came over the scene. She saw no longer the mass of upturned faces, but a mass of receding heads.

A few faces, however, were still turned towards her, but fewer every moment. Presently one only remained. The owner of it came towards her whin-

ing. He said that he had been out of work for two months, because of the lockout in Brown & Co.'s mill. His wife and four children were starving. He didn't care about himself, but if she would do something for them——.

She seldom turned a deaf ear to appeals of that kind, but she paid no attention to this one. Her whole mind was fixed on one idea. The words kept repeating themselves: "I am going to kill your son, if I can."

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN Lillian reached the back door she did not pause to ascertain which way Violet had gone. Before her, at the foot of a short flight of steps was a broad gravel walk, bordered by high hedges of arbor vitæ. She was sure that Violet had gone down this path; and she followed at full speed.

Miss Eversley was well made and active, and years of devotion to out-door sports had greatly increased her natural powers; but she was no match, light-footed as she was, for her strong-willed and longer-limbed pursuer. Still, she had had a considerable start, and although Lillian exerted herself to the utmost, the fugitive reached the gate without being overtaken.

When Lillian came to the gate, she found it open, and was confirmed in her belief that she was on the right track thus far, but in doubt now which way to go. The gate opened into a lane running nearly parallel with St. Joseph's Place, and there was no special reason why Violet should have turned to the right or left. On the other side of the lane were the grounds belonging to cottages fronting on Garfield Place. These were occupied by well-to-do people, mostly professional and business men. They were separated from the lane by a barbed wire fence.

Violet had a speaking acquaintance with some of these people, and it was quite possible that she might take refuge in one of their houses. The fence was a formidable obstacle, but there were gates at intervals.

Lillian stood for a moment just outside the gate undecided what course to take. She could hear the noise of the mob from the direction of the house. The thought of her mother's situation tempted her to go back. Her head swam, but with a desperate effort she calmed herself. She straightened herself and called her cousin's name with a steady voice;—twice, but no answer.

She clasped her hands in agony.

“Oh! My God,” she moaned aloud in the darkness, “direct me what to do.”

A dog barked, and the noise of the mob grew louder.

“I must go somewhere,” she said. “I may as well go the wrong way as stand here.”

She started again, running as she had never run before; all the while tortured by the fear that the fugitive might be going in the opposite direction.

The first gate she came to was shut, but Violet might have entered and closed it after her; no, it was chained and padlocked.

As she pursued her way the barking of the dog grew louder, the noise of the rioters fainter. She was near Mr. Heriott's place now, and the dog was probably his. There was a note of fear in the animal's voice as if he comprehended the state of affairs.

Lillian could see the lights of the cottages on Garfield Place, and there was evidence of excitement among the inmates. Figures were moving back and forth and coming to the windows looking towards St. Joseph's Place.

She did not examine the second gate. If Violet had gone in there she was as safe as she would be anywhere. It was better to keep straight on. She did so until she was suddenly brought to a stop by nearly falling over a heap of white muslin lying across the path.

"My darling pet, what *is* the matter; are you hurt?"

She knelt in the dusty path, and tenderly lifted the helpless girl.

"What is it, precious? Tell me."

Violet wound her arms around her cousin's neck, and murmured, "I'm afraid I've sprained my ankle."

"Oh! If that's all, it's not so bad, though it's bad enough. But if you *will* go tearing around the country at night with high-heeled satin shoes, what can you expect? I hope this will be a lesson to you."

There was something so matter-of-fact about this reproof that Violet was a little comforted. She laid her head on Lillian's shoulder and began to cry softly.

"Where is Aunt Bessie?"

"I left her at the house. She told me that I must go and look after you."

"But what do you think they have done to her?"

"If you had stayed, we would know."

Lillian broke down at last. She was crying.

"Perhaps we would know too much," was Violet's reply.

Lillian soon regained her composure. The very horror of the situation would not admit of weakness. She rose as though to look it in the face.

"It can't be," she said. "Depraved as they are, they wouldn't hurt such a woman as my mother. Whatever they may have done I *know* that she is safe."

"Of course."

Lillian paid no attention to her cousin's assent.

"My mother is so good that she could touch pitch without being defiled. The vilest criminal on earth could not help respecting her."

"Yes, certainly. But, Lily, did you hear that shouting? I think it sounded nearer. Help me up. I think I can walk, if you'll let me lean on you."

"I'll carry you, if necessary. But don't try to walk. If your ankle is sprained it will be very bad for you to walk on it. I don't think they are coming any nearer. In fact, very likely all they wanted was to see papa. When they find that he isn't at home they will go away."

With a sudden start Violet sprung to her feet, in spite of her sprained ankle, and threw herself into her cousin's arms with a loud cry.

"Did you hear it, Lil, did you hear it? They are coming, coming, at last."

She did not mean the mob: her cry was a cry of joy; she had heard a sound that came from a distance; not very loud; but clear, distinct, and unmistakable.

It was a bugle, sounding "Forward!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NOMANSON was passing out of the gate from the Laford grounds when his ear caught the sound of the bugle.

Those near him noticed that his eyes were brighter than usual, and there was an expression about the corners of his mouth that looked like a smile. He knew that his followers who were eagerly watching his face were waiting for his word.

“Well, boys, you heard the bugle, and you know what it means. But they are too late. We’ll get to the Thompson Street factory before them. We can’t help it. That bugle was way off at the armory when it sounded. We have a good three-quarters of a mile start of them. We’ll get there and finish the job before they catch up with us, that is, if it’s not finished already. Most likely it is. Those I sent on to do it know their business. Come on ; let’s see if it’s done.”

He started off again at a run, though not so fast as before, for he had farther to go. Most of the rioters kept with him, though some of the more prudent quietly disappeared, and many of the shorter-winded were distanced. The number of these latter steadily increased ; and the throng gradually trailed out like a comet, with Nomanson and a handful of the best runners as the nucleus.

When this nucleus reached the corner of Temple Avenue it had passed the last group of scattered houses that intercepted their view of the factory. The great building loomed over the half built-up lots, black against the starlit sky. Nomanson had hoped to find the windows already lighted from within. Fearing lest the enterprise might miscarry after all, he increased his speed.

He was somewhat reassured when the wind brought a sound like the noise of falling water—the first section of the mob was there. Soon he could see the black shifting mass surrounding the devoted building, and was presently pushing his way towards the entrance. The men who were still with him helped him in the constantly increasing difficulty of overcoming the ever increasing resistance. Suddenly, a great roar, drowning completely all other ordinary noises announced that the light inside the windows was there at last.

He watched it slowly growing stronger. The excited multitude kept up a clamor hardly less in volume than that with which they had hailed its first appearance. But loud as it was it failed to drown another sound from outside,—so clear and keen and attention-compelling, that it seemed to cut through the other as the bows of an ocean flyer cut through the waves.

It was the bugle again: “Double-time.”

If it had been “About-face,” and the mob had understood and felt bound to obey it, they could hardly have turned more promptly. The five hundred pairs of eyes that had been fixed on the great building

with its slowly gathering illumination were now striving to penetrate the obscurity in the direction of the bugle-call.

Most of the mob remained staring at the dark jumble of scattered trees and houses that lay between the factory and St. Joseph's Place; but some began to worm their way towards the outskirts of the crowd; others, already there, were leaving.

Nomanson after trying in vain to see something of the soldiers, turned once more to the factory. The light in the windows was fainter than when he last looked. He waited to see whether it would brighten again. No; it grew fainter still.

Now it was easier to make his way through the crowd for their faces were towards him; and many of them recognized him. In less than a minute, he had reached the great door opening into the main room. It had been forced open; and about it there was a group of familiar figures. He pressed his way in among them, and looked inside.

Streams of burning oil were running over the floor, and he could smell the odor of charred wood, mingled with that of the rank petroleum smoke; but nothing seemed to be fairly on fire except the oil.

Élise Larose was close to him with white face and gleaming eyes. He spoke sharply!

“ You should have put in more oil. Where is it? Show me! More of it at once ! ”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“ We have no more. All we brought is in there.”

He stamped his foot, angrily.

“ But there must be more in here. There was a

kerosene lamp the night I came here. Probably there's a barrel of it somewhere about the place."

Again she answered with a shrug :

"If we could find it, but where shall we look? Never mind, my friend. It is enough. In ten minutes we can roast a thousand oxen right in there."

He could not restrain his impatience.

"In ten minutes?—yes, and in five minutes the soldiers will be here. Didn't you hear the bugle sounding? We must find that oil, and send it in there to help along."

As he finished speaking, there was a sudden outburst of flames through the smoke that filled the top of the room. One of the wooden stanchions that supported the floor above, was all at once enveloped in fire. Élise laughed.

"Ah! it go to the queen's taste. We put a little oil in the upper story, and now it comes through. No fear, my boy; all will go well—that is, not well for your friend Mr. Laford; eh!"

Nomanson's anxiety was somewhat relieved. Instead of going in quest of more oil, he stood watching the burning stanchion.

The smoke was too thick for him to see whether the floor above was taking fire, but the flames seemed to grow brighter, and he could hear, louder and louder, the crackling of the wood.

In a moment, his attention was drawn to another sound that made him wheel suddenly, and bring the butt of his rifle smartly from the ground to the hollow of his right arm. There seemed to be a con-

fused outburst of different cries—a sort of composite cry,—but this one was intelligible.

“There they are!”

The throng swayed as numbers of men pressed back from the front; hustling, jamming and staggering; accompanied by oaths and curses. Through the struggling mass, Nomanson and about a dozen followers ploughed their way to the front.

There, before him, stretching across the street a hundred feet away, was a black wall surmounted by spikes of glimmering steel. Moving along its front at a rapid pace was a figure wearing a fatigue-cap.

He knew that the black wall was made of soldiers, that the glittering spikes were bayonets, and that the moving figure was a mounted officer.

A spot of fire blazed out from the right of the black wall. He heard a sharp noise like the crack of a heavy whip. He saw the horse and rider in front of the soldiers; and all was black. Only for an instant. Then came a sputtering blaze of illuminated smoke, a rattling series of reports, the air full of singing bullets. Darkness again.

A wild uproar from the rabble. Yells and shuffling of feet. He knew that they were running, but he still faced the enemy with a smile. He had been anxious, hitherto, lest when it actually came to standing up to be shot at, his nerve might fail. Now he had been put to the test, and his reputation had been firmly established with himself. He knew that, unless it actually hit him, no bullet could prevent him from accomplishing what he proposed to do.

It was not his choice, just then, to expose himself

rashly. Still he did not intend to abandon the field without a shot. Waiting until the blinding effect of the volley had passed away, he leveled his rifle at the black wall and fired.

This was promptly answered by half a dozen from the enemy, and shots to the right and left of him showed him that he was not the only one who had the nerve to stand fire. He snapped a new cartridge into his rifle, and went towards the factory.

The greater number of the dispersing mob, between him and the burning building, were trying to run, but they got in each other's way and made scarcely more rapid progress than those who walked. He perceived to his satisfaction, that the fire was gaining rapidly. One window on the second floor had broken and the smoke was pouring out in a thick column.

When he reached the northern corner of the building, he observed that the militia were moving forward in column of companies. When within twenty yards of the building, they halted.

The colonel, on his horse alongside the leading company, was apparently in doubt as to what to do. This uncertainty was not difficult for Nomanson to understand. They had come to prevent the mob from burning the factory, and they had come too late. A well-equipped body of fireman could have saved the building, but without buckets, or hose, or even water, nothing could be done. He laughed quietly, as he watched their impotent chagrin; and Élise Larose, beside him, took up the laugh, shrilly.

The colonel turned in his saddle, and gave an

order. The rear companies came into line on a run. As the line was forming, the fire inside the factory gave a sudden leap ; two more windows fell outwards, and the broken glass came glittering down.

Nomanson and his group of adherents, at the corner of the building, had been partially concealed in the obscurity. But the increased glare that came through the windows brought them at once into full view. Besides, the soldiers were forming line to the left, so that the last company would be directly opposite to them on the other side of the road. Nomanson did not care to wait until the formation was completed. His policy just then was to make himself as little conspicuous as possible. He had still too much use for that very cleverly constructed machine that he called his body to run any unnecessary risk of having it suddenly put out of order.

So he retreated quickly towards the back of the factory. The mob was pretty well scattered by that time, but many had taken shelter behind the building ; anxious to keep out of danger, but still curious to see what was to happen. Nomanson had another object in view.

There was a yard behind the factory, containing some outbuildings and surrounded by a low fence. He vaulted over the fence, and was about to enter the back door of the factory which was half-way open, when Vera laid her hand on his arm.

“What are you going to do ?”

“I am going to take a look at the soldiers. You stay here. I will be back presently.”

She held his arm a little tighter.

“Be careful. Do nothing rash.”

Her voice was softer than usual. There was almost an imploring tone in it. Perhaps she was conscious of this and rather annoyed at herself for it, for she suddenly dropped his arm, and stepped back. None of the rest made any opposition. He entered the building alone, and passed through a hall, dark, smoky and hot, to a door standing ajar at the farther end, and peeped cautiously out. The fire light was strong, and he could see the soldiers plainly, about twenty yards away. They had formed line, and were standing with arms at a “carry,” waiting for the next order. The colonel moved along the line, as if to see that every man was in his place, but Nomanson guessed that his mind was really occupied with the perplexing question, what to do.

But Nomanson had something of much more importance on his mind than speculating about the colonel’s intentions. He widened the crack of the door very cautiously; and, beginning on the left of the line of battle, his eye traveled slowly over the long row of fire-lit faces, to the extreme right of the line. The colonel had just reached that place and pulled up his horse. The concealed rebel scowled in angry disappointment.

If he had only known it, the man he was looking for was there. But in his ignorance of military matters, he had no idea that officers were ever stationed in the rear of their men. Knowing that Victor Laford was an officer, he had expected to see him posted prominently somewhere; and, seeing nothing of him, he supposed that he was not there,

and that the four officers in front of the line were the only ones present.

The quickly increasing heat and smoke were making his position intolerable. The wood of the partition between him and the main room was crackling. He ran his eye along the line again, and quietly retreated.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LATEST AND WORST OUTRAGE OF CAPITAL.

Peaceable Workingmen shot down in the streets of New Manchester by Pinkerton Thugs disguised as State Soldiers. Four killed and twelve wounded. Not a shot fired in return.

Civil Law overthrown in New Manchester and Martial Law proclaimed in its stead.

Guards posted at Every Street Corner. Citizens going to work Challenged and Imprisoned in the Guard-house.

So-called Freeman of America ! how much longer will you endure this ?

Such were the headings that caught Nomanson's eye when he opened the "Firebrand," next morning. He was seated at breakfast, as cool as though he had been engaged in nothing unusual ; but his companions regarded him with an awed interest that showed how well they understood the real state of the case. Not a word had been spoken from the time he entered. The landlady had placed his frugal meal before him with unusual promptness. All lips were silent, and all eyes were fixed on him.

He smiled, and glanced through the article. Then he laid down the *Firebrand* and picked up the *Gazette*.

RIOT AND MURDER.

BOTH THE LAFORD MILLS BURNED BY A MOB OF STRIKERS.

Soldiers called to the scene to preserve order, are fired upon by the rioters, and compelled in self-defense to return the fire. One

soldier shot dead and three dangerously wounded. Two of the mob killed and four wounded, one mortally.

Good citizens, of all classes unite in demanding State intervention, and declare that if the Governor still refuses to accede to the demands of the Mayor and Sheriff, he will be morally responsible for any further loss of life and property.

The Thirty-third Regiment deputized ; and the remaining factories guarded.

Mr. Laford's house saved only by the prompt arrival of the military.

A night of horror in New Manchester.

Fears openly expressed that similar scenes will be enacted in Locustown and Iron City.

The Governor's inaction condemned on all sides.

Nomanson smiled again, laid down the paper, and attacked the defiantly tough bacon on his plate. Mrs. Smith could restrain herself no longer.

"I hear there was a riot, last night, Mr. Nomanson."

"There *is* something of that kind mentioned in the papers."

A heavy-faced workman at the other end of the table spoke :

"That wern't no riot. It were a massacre ; that's what it were."

He called Nomanson for corroboration, and the others did the same. Nomanson appeared to be interested in nothing except his food.

His immobility provoked Miss Jennings, and when provoked she was daring. She put the question point-blank :

"Did *you* hear anything about it Mr. Nomanson ?"

"I've just been reading something about it in the papers. If you will wait till I get through breakfast I'll read what is said about it."

"Didn't you hear anything about it last night?"

"Yes, I did hear quite a good deal about it, but I don't put much faith in idle rumors. I'll read you what the papers say. *Of course* that's reliable."

All looked disappointed; they had expected something at first hand. But they knew better than to try to get it, if that grim young incendiary chose to keep his mouth shut. So fully convinced were they of this fact, that when he had finished eating, all the others had left the table. There was only one person besides himself in the room. Frances was quietly clearing away the table. She was very pale, and there was a redness about the eyes and a droop at the corners of the mouth that roused his sympathy. He spoke to her kindly.

"How's this? Why are you not at the store? I hope you're not out of a job again."

"No, I went to the store as usual, but they told me to go home. The store is closed on account of the disturbances."

"Oh! Will it be open to-morrow?"

"I don't know."

He was rather dull and listless that morning. He had not been fully compensated by his six hours of sleep for the intense excitement and violent exertion which he had been through. He turned to the papers once more. The *Firebrand* happened to be the one he picked up. He began at the leading article.

“ Last night, about ten o’clock, a fire broke out in John Laford’s factory in James Street. The fire department was summoned, but before they arrived, it was too far gone to be saved. About an hour after, the factory on Thompson Street, belonging to the same owner, was also discovered to be on fire, and another alarm was sent out.

“ Both these fires took place at a time when a great many of New Manchester’s locked-out workmen were on the streets, and large numbers of them were naturally attracted to the scene of the catastrophe. While watching the progress of the flames at the Thompson Street mill, the people were suddenly, and without warning of any kind, fired upon by four companies of the Thirty-third Regiment. The crowd scattered in alarm, and left the valiant defenders of the commonwealth in possession of the field, and of the dead and wounded, among the latter a woman and two children. It is impossible at present to give the names of these unfortunates, or to tell exactly how many fell before the murderous volley. Four persons were undoubtedly killed outright, and twelve so seriously wounded that they had to be carried or helped from the spot. Later advices will probably swell the number.

“ From the temper of the people at the moment of going to press, it seems probable that this outrage will at last——”

Frances had been slowly finishing her work, trying to screw her courage to the speaking point. At

last, in sheer desperation, she showed herself even more daring than Miss Jennings.

"Did you have anything to do with that—that disturbance, last night?"

Nomanson looked up from his paper. She held a plate unconsciously in her hand; and, on her face betrayed an expression half wistful, half-frightened.

"My dear girl, you don't think that if I had anything to do with it I'd be such a fool as to give it away; even to my best friend?"

A faint color came into her pale cheek. The look of fear disappeared, and she smiled with pleasure.

"Do you mean that I'm your best friend?"

"Well, you're one of them."

The flush grew deeper, and she looked happier.

"If I am your best friend; that is, one of your best friends, would you mind—very much—if I gave you a piece of advice?"

"Not at all. Advice doesn't bother me in the least."

There was something in his tone that sent the color from her cheek and the smile from her lips. She dropped her eyes and began nervously to collect the plates. He waited for her to speak; but, as she went on with her task and refrained from availing herself of his permission to give him advice, he picked up the papers and went up to the parlor, where he took another look at the *Firebrand*.

"The origin of these fires was probably incendiary. Who the incendiaries were will be discovered later. It is too early yet to charge the crime, if

crime has been committed, on any person. But one fact is significant. The two Laford factories were re insured last week, to their full value. Of course, intelligent people cannot help drawing their own conclusion."

Nomanson at once detected the absurdity of this statement. He knew that insurance policies stipulated that the company in each case, should be free from liability in the event of a building being destroyed by mob violence.

"It has been notorious, for some time, that all self-respecting men have been using every possible effort to get their discharges from the Thirty-third Regiment. No strenuous effort has been made by the officers to retain them. As fast as vacancies have occurred, they have been filled by outcasts and ruffians from New York and Chicago. Men from the coal regions have recognized many of these as members of that atrocious band of cutthroats known as the Pinkerton Detective Agency, the murderers of the unfortunate coal-miners of Pennsylvania. It is evident that the same tactics, so successfully employed in crushing the late strike of the Amalgamated Association of Coal and Iron Workers in the "Quaker State," are to be inaugurated in New Manchester, Locus-town and Iron City. If any of our readers are unfamiliar with these tactics and would like to be informed concerning them, we would be pleased to enlighten them. The plan is very simple. It consists merely in shooting down all workmen who presume to oppose the will of Plutocracy.

"That the Thirty-third Regiment is merely another name for the Pinkerton Detective Agency is shown indirectly by the following facts. It is well known that, on occasions like the present, militia regiments do not turn out more than one-third of their nominal strength. These holiday soldiers have no liking for service in which there is danger, or the appearance of danger. The Thirty-third Regiment consists of eight companies of about thirty-five men to a company. Of these, five companies are now quartered at the armory. On the occasion of last night's attack on the people the armory was left in charge of a guard of some forty men. Yet there were at least two hundred present on the scene of the massacre. The Thirty-third Regiment therefore has not only broken the record by turning out its full strength; but has, it would seem, *multiplied itself*. It is not hard to guess where the extra men came from."

Nomanson threw down the paper, and although amused at the ingenuity of the writer, it nauseated him, for he despised falsehood. Turning to the *Gazette*, he read :

"(Continued from page 1.)

"When the troops arrived at the scene they found the factory in possession of a mob engaged in setting it on fire. Prompt action was necessary, and Colonel Sancroft ordered the mob to disperse. He was answered by jeers, threats, and curses. Several bricks were thrown at him, one of them missing him

very narrowly. Seeing that it was useless to try to make the mob listen to reason, he turned his horse and was riding back to his command, when the rioters began firing. Private Muglord of Company E fell to the ground dying, and Privates Jobson and Gregg of Company A and Corporal Rickett of Company C were severely wounded. Thus attacked, the troops returned the fire, without waiting for orders. Wishing to avoid bloodshed as far as possible, the colonel commanded the firing to cease, and a charge to be made. The men responded with spirit; and, led by Colonel Sancroft in person, drove the rioters from the field, scattering them in all directions. Five of the mob were left *hors-de-combat*, one dead and four wounded.

“While this event is greatly to be deplored, there can be no doubt that the troops only did their duty, and no possible blame can attach to them or their commander.

“Having quelled the riot, and finding it impossible to save the factory from the flames which by this time had gained great headway, Colonel Sancroft determined to take what measures were possible for the protection of those factories that still remained; and which, but for the colonel’s promptness, would undoubtedly have shared a like fate. The command was divided and a platoon sent to each one of the menaced buildings, thus saving them for the time. The Thirty-third Regiment however, is not sufficiently numerous to protect the factories on both sides of the river, nor even the residences on St. Joseph’s Place, one of which was in serious danger

last night. To do this at least three thousand men are needed. The duty of the Governor is plain.

“A meeting of the Common Council will be held to-day, at which—”

“Hey, boss!”

The front door had been left open, and that of the sitting room also, and a boy had entered without attracting his attention,—a ragged, barefooted youngster, whose height suggested twelve years, and his face twenty. Nomanson recognized him as the boy who had given him the information that the Laford house was to be burned by the rioters.

“I come over here, ’cause I thought ye might like ter know there’s agoin’ to be a big row over in Iron City to-night. There’s a meetin’ been called for eight o’clock for to condemn the doin’s of the mill owners. An’ the mayor he’s mad about that business last night, an’ he’s stuck up a paper sayin’ they sha’n’t have no meetin’. An’ the workin’ men they says they’ll have the meetin’ anyhow. An’ they says he can’t bring the sojers over there, ’cause it’s another county. An’ I thought ye might like to know, so I come over here a purpose to tell ye.”

Nomanson smiled at the boy’s eagerness in the cause of mischief.

“All right,” he said. “I’ll be over there before eight o’clock. I want to see all the fun that’s going.”

The boy eyed him with a look of disappointment. He had expected more enthusiasm.

“There’s goin’ to be a big racket over there, bet your life there is. The mayor he’s hoppin’ mad, he

is ; and he's goin' to the town hall to swear in special police. An' the men say they're goin' to take all the guns and cartridges out of the hardware stores ; and if any shootin' is done, the workin' men won't be the only ones shot. I tell ye, now, there's goin' to be a great big racket, an' don't ye let it 'scape your rec'lection."

" I won't. You'll see me over there in time to take it all in."

" An' there's some o' them Anarchist blokes over there what says they'll go to the town hall, and put dynamite under it, an' if the mayor goes to swear in any special police, they'll blow 'em all up to wunst. An' I thought ye might like to know, so I come all the way over here to tell ye."

The boy left reluctantly and Nomanson went to his room. He threw himself on his bed and slept until a cracked bell sounded the call to luncheon. After this meal had been disposed of he went upstairs again. The first thing he did was to go to the looking-glass and gaze long and earnestly at his own image. " Maybe it's the last time I'll ever see you, old man," he said, addressing the familiar face in the cheap frame ; it smiled back at him as he spoke.

Then he took his revolver and its appurtenances from the closet. The rifle he had left at the club room before he came home. He strapped on the weapon and stuffed the cartridges into his pockets. Then he put on his coat and buttoned it to prevent his armament from being too aggressively conspicuous.

He saw Frances had placed herself at the foot of

the stairs so that he could not reach the door without pushing her aside. She was pale and her face haggard.

“Well, is this house in a state of blockade?” he asked, good-humoredly.

She stretched out her hand towards him; saying, “Don’t.”

“Don’t what?”

“Go out.”

“Why not?”

“You know why. You are going out to fight. You ought not to. It’s wicked, and it’s—it’s dangerous.”

“I don’t think it’s wicked. You’ll have to leave that to my own conscience; and as to the danger, I’m willing to risk it; and if I’m satisfied, everyone else ought to be.”

“I’m not.”

“What difference does it make to you?”

“All the difference in the world. Oh! if they kill you my heart will break.”

Another instant and the way was clear. The girl had realized what she had said. She swayed aside, turning her back to him, and stood supporting herself against the wall, her head hanging, her face crimson, her hands clasped tight together.

CHAPTER XXX.

The mayor of Iron City was an old-fashioned western desperado. He had been a miner, in the sixties ; a gambler, in the seventies ; and, as a politician in the eighties, he showed the same qualities that had made him a success in his previous career. He had always been a game fighter, against nature and man. He had kept his pick-axe going, early and late, in spite of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, mosquitoes, wolves, and men. He had known the time when no officer of the law that he was habitually violating dared arrest him ; and he had arrested men that no other officer of the law he had sworn to enforce dared to tackle. He was a little man, lean, high-nosed, moustached ; and minus three fingers of his left hand.

This man had sworn by the name of a person who could find no name greater than his own to swear by that the meeting in *Ætna* Square should not take place. He had a strong contempt for mobs of factory hands, and believed that the half score of constables at his disposal would be ample to enforce his orders. With that number of men he had once defended a jail against two hundred lynchers, each armed with a rifle, and beaten them off. But as the day wore on, he found that he had made a mistake.

The people made no attempt at open resistance.

They only threw the dead weight of passive bodies against the command to disperse, and when they were dispersed in one place, they reassembled in another. As the afternoon wore on, the masses became too great for the exhausted officers to make any pretence of handling. By six o'clock, *Ætna* Square was full to overflowing, and the constables had given up all attempt to keep it clear.

About that time the mayor was seen in a light wagon driving over to New Manchester. He was chewing his moustache. One who knew him well said: "that means business." A rumor gained credence that the mayor had gone after the Thirty-third Regiment. The consensus of opinion was that the Thirty-third Regiment "hadn't got no right to come over acrost the river, 'cept when the gov'nor orders 'em to."

About half-past six, a man was seen standing on a wagon intended to serve as a platform for the speakers of the proposed meeting. There was a general movement in his direction. He raised his hand, and commanded some degree of silence.

"My friends, it is not yet time to call the meetin' to order, but I would just like your attention a moment until I read you a little piece of news. It is a telegram from a friend in New York."

"My friend write to me in German. I give it to you in English."

"My dear Karl:

"Perhaps it may be as well for you to know two hundred of Pinkerton's hired assassins—"

An angry roar interrupted him.

“—Two hundred of Pinkerton’s hired assassins are on their way to the west.”

Another interruption of the same kind.

“It is not positively stated where they are going. Their leader says Chicago. Very likely they will go there first, but I think there is no doubt—”

Another outburst drowned the speaker’s voice.

The speaker had not noticed that another person had ascended the wagon, whose appearance was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. The day before, nineteen out of twenty of those who now joined in the ovation had not been aware of his existence. Now, nineteen out of twenty instantly recognized him. They knew the tall figure, the derby hat set straight over the dark, stern young face, and the rifle in the left hand.

The speaker turned, and recognized him, too. He extended his hand, saying: “Ah! my young friend Nomanson. Well my boy, I am glad to see you.”

Nomanson grasped the offered hand and then turned to the crowd. There was immediate silence.

“I don’t suppose that any of you doubt why those two hundred men have been sent to Chicago. If there are two hundred fresh men in the Thirty-third Regiment to-morrow morning, you’ll have an idea where they came from.”

A roar of affirmation.

“When those two hundred men come, perhaps the mayor will be able to suppress free speech among the citizens of Iron City.”

A roar of negation.

“I understand, now, that he has gone over to New

Manchester to get the Thirty-third Regiment, to put a stop to this meeting."

A roar of defiance to the mayor.

"Whether he has really gone after the regiment or not I don't know; but, if he has, I propose to be before hand with him. I suppose there's one thing we're all agreed on: We're going to hold this meeting."

Again a roar of affirmation.

"All right. There are three streets leading into this square. All we have to do is to build a barricade across each of those three streets; and then, if the militia are coming, let them come."

The acclamation was less hearty. All eyes were no longer fixed on the speaker. Men looked at each other.

"It's about time the workingmen of America got over being afraid to look these soldiers in the face. How can we to expect to be free men, when we haven't got the nerve to stand up against a hired gang of Pinkerton loafers and office boys; because they wear blue coats, and carry guns with bayonets stuck on the ends. If you want to be slaves, that's *your* business; I haven't anything more to say to you. But if you want to be men——"

Nothing more could be heard for awhile. The noise was like the sound of a cataract. When it had subsided sufficiently to allow him to be heard he continued:

"Now then, all of you who are not afraid, get to work. Bring paving stones and brick; and bags filled with anything soft, hay or flour or dirt, or

something of that sort; but don't bring boxes, or barrels, or carts, or anything else of wood. It don't stop bullets well, and it splinters."

He came down, and the work began amid tremendous uproar, and the barricades rose rapidly. The one on Peoria Avenue was the most important, as the militia were expected to cross the South bridge, though they might possibly make a flank movement by way of Locustown. Nomanson directed the building of this barricade himself, so far as he could amid the general confusion. In twenty minutes it was higher than a man's head; so that it was necessary to climb part of the way up to look over.

Nomanson was pushing the last bale of hay into place at the top, when he saw near him the boy who had twice brought him important news.

"Hello! you're just the fellow I want."

"What for, boss?" he asked, eagerly.

"I want you to run up the street, and over the bridge to where you can see the armory. As soon as you see the soldiers coming, run back and tell me."

"Oh! ye want me to be a scout."

"That's just it."

"I'll go. Let's see, now; I don't want to make no mistake. Ye want me to go acrost the bridge to where I can see th' arm'ry, and when the mugs with the soldier clothes onto 'em comes out, ye want me to come an' tell ye?"

"That's it. It's an important business, and I want a fellow that knows what he's about."

"All right, boss. I'm your size. I'm goin'."

He scrambled over the barricade, and scampered off.

“Now, I want some of you to go and see that all those fellows with shields stuck on their coats are put outside the barricades. We don’t want any traitors in the camp, to shoot us in the back when the soldiers come.”

A hundred men started to execute this order. The handful of constables were cowed by the numbers and audacity of the mob. Those who had not already made their way outside the rebel lines were expelled without resistance.

The insurgents being in possession of the field, and the time for the meeting having arrived, it was held amid great enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, Nomanson examined the barricades, and satisfied himself that the constables had been sent beyond the fortifications, and sent scouts to watch the North bridge. He then returned to the speaker’s stand, and listened to the address. Élise and Vera were on the wagon. Vera waved her hand to him. He waved his in reply, and walked back to the barricade.

By the time this young chief of the “Savages of Civilization,” had completed his round and returned to the post of greater danger, the short summer twilight was past, and the stars were out. The night was intensely hot. He took off his coat and found a seat on a sack of grain. There were but few people near the barricade, most of them being at the mass meeting a hundred feet away. The crowd that had filled the square earlier in the evening had

diminished somewhat. Many of the more conservative, alarmed by the warlike preparations, had quietly gone home. Ardetti and Stamm were near him. A new speaker was addressing the meeting. He recognized the shrill voice of Élise Larose.

Suddenly, a dark object came tumbling over the barricade, and stood before him, panting. He sprang up, and the others nearest him gathered around.

“They’s comin’, gov’nor—I seen ‘em comin’.—They come out,—and I waited to make sure—which way—they come, an’ they turned this way,—an’ I just waited to make sure,—an’ then I started,—an’ run all the way—for to tell ye.”

“How many of them were there?”

“I dunno. They was—a big lot. I dunno—how many, I seen ‘em comin’—from the arm’ry—an’ they stretched a block—but I didn’t count ‘em. An’ I run all the way for to tell ye.”

The news spread like wildfire. Men came swarming to the barricade. There were more arms in the hands of the rioters than there had been the day before; for the few stores in Iron City that dealt in weapons and ammunition had been looted. There were a few rifles, and more shotguns, and plenty of cheap nickel-plated revolvers. In a minute, the top of the barricade was bristling with weapons. Nomanson was at the centre of the embankment, with Stamm on his left, and Ardetti on his right. A middle aged workman took his place next to Ardetti, with the remark: “Well, boys, we’re in for it now.” Ardetti answered quickly, with a laugh, “Yes, and they’ll find they’re in for it, too.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

From the top of the barricade, the long street leading to the bridge seemed deserted. The lamps had been lighted, but inside the barricades, Noman-son had ordered them to be extinguished. Looking out from the darkness he could see two figures behind a flight of stone steps, peering through the lower part of the railing ; and four others, here and there, leaning out of windows ; all gazing intently down the street.

After some time, something was seen approaching the insurgent works. But even at a distance, no one could mistake it for a regiment. About fifty feet from the barricade it stopped. It was a light wagon containing two men.

One of them stood up and began to speak. A few words only could be heard, but enough to confirm the belief that it was the mayor, reading the Riot Act.

When the mayor had finished reading, he spoke in louder tones and more distinctly.

“ You’ve all heard what I just read. Now, I’d advise you all to heed it. I ain’t goin’ to stand any nonsense, and that goes. If you think I ain’t able to enforce my orders, you’ve made the biggest mistake of your lives. I’ve got two hundred men within call, all swore in as special officers, and anybody what resists ‘em is resistin’ an officer in the discharge

of his dooty. I give you people two minutes to disperse and get to your homes, and stay there like quiet an' lawr-abidin' citizens. If you don't choose to do that; why, it ain't my fault. I shall do *my* dooty—."

At this point, some one among the rioters, by accident or design, discharged a pistol. The horse plunged, and the mayor dropped into his seat.

The buggy wheeled around, and rattled away down the street.

The men at the barricade grew noisy,—and noisier, as the two minutes of grace sped by. Then derisively noisy, as the time lengthened to five minutes. Many had ceased watching the street, when fifteen minutes had passed.

Then a brazen voice of command that announced the coming of the military, called the defenders of the barricade to attention. Instantly every man who could see over the rampart was looking expectantly and silently in the direction of the enemy. Then a voice, hoarse with excitement, broke the silence :

“By God, he means business.”

Another man turned, and walked away. Three or four demanded where he was going. He answered, sullenly :

“I’m goin’ home, and that’s where ye’d better all go. This here thing is gettin’ too blamed serious for me. I’ve got a wife and four children to support, and I ain’t goin’ to get shot, like them fellers last night.”

He was answered with angry curses and threats. Others followed his example. The crowd thinned

rapidly. Still there was more than a hundred left when the cry arose that the soldiers were in sight. Nothing was to be seen of them but a great number of shimmering threads of light, scarcely noticeable in the darkness, were it not that they were all moving with the same rhythmic cadence.

This time the rebels fired first. An overgrown boy discharged a pistol and instantly, the whole crest of the barricade blazed out in a scattering fusillade.

Before starting, in obedience to the orders of the mayor, to attack the rebel works, the colonel of the Thirty-third Regiment, had told his men that he intended to carry the barricade with the bayonet, and had given strict orders that not a shot was to be fired except at word of command. As he had no confidence in the ability of his horse to climb over a rampart, he led his men on foot. Knowing that his breath would not hold out for a long run, he advanced at a walk, intending to take the charging pace when close to the enemy.

But his plans were completely upset by a nervous young travelling salesman, who wore a corporal's stripes, and marched near the centre of the leading company. His rifle was loaded, for the colonel had not taken the precaution to "open chamber," and see that every piece was empty, which would have insured obedience to his command not to fire without orders.

The corporal had no intention of disobeying his superior officer, but the nearly simultaneous discharge of a hundred guns and pistols made him lose

his self-control. Oblivious to everything but the instinct of self-defense, he halted and fired.

Half a dozen of his comrades promptly followed his example. The rest of the company followed theirs. The companies in the rear, seeing the first company halt, did the same.

For the second time, the colonel found himself between two fires, and in imminent danger of being shot by his own men. With an oath, he turned to the bugler, who lay flat on his face. Supposing that he had fallen by a bullet, the colonel faced to the rear, and commanded "cease firing," in a voice of thunder. As this had no effect, he rushed along the firing line striking up the rifles with his sword, and uttering anathemas loud and deep. Where he actually was, the firing stopped, but as soon as he had passed it broke out again; while, the excitement spreading to the rear, several shots were fired from there, greatly to the discomposure of the men in front, who, in accordance with poetical justice, found themselves in the same situation in which they had placed their commanding officer.

The rebel fire continued steadily, though its volume had much diminished. In fact, within a minute after the firing began, the defenders of the insurgent fort had been reduced to six men, a boy, and two women.

The mob lacked the discipline that holds a hundred cowards in place because each fears to be the first to retreat. Not a man was hurt by the fire of the soldiers. The bullets flew overhead, or buried themselves in the stuffed sacks of the barricade. But they frightened many, and a panic and stampede ensued.

Nomanson was reloading his rifle when a familiar voice spoke hoarsely in his ear:

“Say, boss, pretty much all the fellers is gone.”

“All right, my little man, you’d better run along, too.”

“Yes, I will—when the cows come home. I ain’t scared. Them blokes out there can’t hit nothin’.”

Nomanson laughed aloud. He looked along the barricade, to see how many of his little army were still in line. There were Ardetti and Stamm, two more of the Rifle Club and two men who were unknown to him, and Vera, in the act of picking up a rifle dropped by one of the fugitives, while Élise was waving her red flag and shouting.

He turned to the boy and laughed again, “Nine against two hundred; but we’ll stand them off; by God, we will.”

Nomanson seldom swore. His lapses in this respect were due to hilarity; they seldom or never occurred in moments of anger.

For three minutes the insurgents kept up a steady fire, and as the two hundred men drawn across the avenue stood without any protection it is not to be wondered at that some of the bullets from the barricade should take effect.

The first casualty was announced when a man in the second company quietly remarked, “I’m shot,” and walked to the rear, holding one arm in his other hand. It seemed such a simple and matter-of-fact thing to be shot that the men who noticed the incident were rather “braced up” by it than otherwise.

The second casualty was different: and sent a

ghastly thrill through every uniformed counter-jumper that witnessed it. A member of the first company was just taking aim. Instead of firing, he threw up his arms, and his rifle fell upon the pavement with a clash that was heard above the rapid series of reports. He staggered back, turned round twice, and fell.

Two of his comrades went to him. One put his hand on his heart. The fallen man lay still.

Another dropped all in a heap on the right of the first company. Another near the centre staggered forward and went down on his face. Still another turned and walked to the rear unsteadily, his hand pressed to his head. One reeled to the side of the street and steadied himself against an area railing. One of the fallen men kept trying to rise, shrieking hideously.

The colonel had found a bugler in the rear of the second company. Panting with exertion and choking with rage, he managed to gasp, "Cease firing. Blow, d—— it; blow!" Half the men in the second company and several in the other two were firing wildly in the air, by that time. The call sounded rather falteringly, for the young bugler's heart was beating at racing speed. The rattle of musketry continued unabated. The colonel ground his teeth.

"D—— them, won't anything stop them? Are they all crazy? Sound it again."

The second call had no more effect than the first. The colonel dashed his sword on the pavement.

"I resign the command of this infernal regiment. Now let them shoot and be d——d."

The shooting, however, could not last forever. Each man had left the armory with ten rounds of ammunition. One who had been specially lavish in its waste soon found his cartridge-box empty. He started to the rear ; intending, as he said afterwards, to get a fresh supply from some of the men in the second company. The same idea seemed to occur simultaneously to several others. The retrograde movement spread like a wave. The men in the second company saw their comrades coming back on them ; some retreated of their own accord, others were forced back by sheer physical pressure. The third and fourth companies were in turn swept away by the tide of fugitives. In half a minute, the last vestige of order had disappeared, and the Thirty-third Regiment was a mob of armed men in uniform ; the laborious training of nine years, shattered at a blow !

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE axe that will split a board will stop when it strikes a knot. In this case the axe had struck a tough one.

Take from their desks and counters a few hundred young men of commercial habits and subordinate disposition, arm them with deadly weapons, train them to march and fire at the word of command, and you have a mob-dispersing machine that, in nineteen cases out of twenty, will work to perfection. But there *is* a twentieth case, and the Thirty-third Regiment had found it.

Nine men who stand fast when ninety run, are not to be reckoned with on a mere numerical basis, and the retreat of the two hundred was only the last of a long series of similar events, the earliest of which occurred before the dawn of history.

When the militiamen began their retreat they were a compact body; but, the cohesive force which had held them together being removed, the huddled mass rapidly disintegrated. The timid ones hastened to get out of danger. The more courageous walked slowly, loading their weapons, and stopping at intervals to discharge them in the direction of the enemy. This semblance of continuing the combat, tended to quicken the retreat; for any who lingered, found themselves in danger of being shot by their own comrades.

When the foremost of the fugitives reached a cross street, some of them saw in it a chance for shelter, by placing a block of houses between themselves and the rebel bullets.

The militiamen would step out into the avenue to fire, and then retreat into the side street to load. This was an agreeable way of fighting, as the danger was slight, with plenty of noise and smoke; and under its influence the spirits of the soldiers began to rise.

The colonel, swearing vehemently with what breath he had left, had been borne back by the tide of fugitives and swept around the corner into this street. He was making no effort to control his men. Through the smoke and darkness the bugler, whom he had last seen stretched on the pavement, approached him, asking:

“Have you any orders to give, sir?”

“Damn it, sir; is this you? Where have you been, sir? I thought you were shot. If not, sir, why in the name of heaven were you lying down?”

“I—I wasn’t shot, sir. The fellows behind were firing, and—I—thought—I might be shot, and I—I lay down so the bullets would go over me.”

“Well, sir, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. A most undignified proceeding, sir. As for giving orders, I have none to give. What use would it be? I am disgusted with this regiment, sir; perfectly disgusted. I shall resign my commission the first thing to-morrow morning.”

The bugler made no reply, but stood by the colonel’s side as if in hopes that he would reconsider

his determination to abandon the regiment to its own devices.

Presently, a new-comer, in civilian attire, approached. He proved to be the mayor.

After the mayor had given his orders to the colonel, he had driven into a side street, and there awaited the result of the attack. When he saw the soldiers retreating he was much chagrined, and showed it very plainly in his address to the colonel.

“If it ain’t too much of a liberty, Colonel Sancroft, perhaps you’ll excuse my askin’ what you an’ your men are doin’ here, when I sent you to occupy *Ætna Square.*”

The colonel had recovered his breath, and his rage had been succeeded by the calm of despair. He answered quietly :

“I have done my best, Mr. Mayor. So far as I am concerned I court an investigation. I led the regiment as far as it would go ; and I am ready to prove this statement. We found the rioters strongly intrenched, and we were received with a hot fire. I endeavored to induce the men to advance, but it was of no avail. I cannot express to you, sir, the grief and mortification I feel at the conduct of the regiment I have the misfortune to command.”

The old gentleman’s voice faltered at the last words, and his head sank forward on his chest. The mayor was a rough man but not unkindly, and he spoke in an altered tone.

“Well, well, Colonel, don’t take it so much to heart. I reckon your soldier-boys ain’t much used to this sort o’ work. I’ve known brave men to feel

almighty sick the first time they had to stand up and be made bull's-eyes of. We'll give 'em time, Colonel, and you'll see 'em face the music like little men. But it ain't no use their shootin' from here. They're only wastin' their ammunition. Here's your bugle-man. Suppose you just tell him to play the tune that means "Stop shootin'."

The colonel gave a gesture of discouragement.

"He has sounded that call twice already without result."

"Well, we must do sumpin' about it. I reckon we'd better hold a council o' war. Do you know where the lieutenant-colonel is?"

The bugler volunteered to find him.

When the lieutenant-colonel arrived, his opinion was asked as to the best course to pursue. He answered that the men were entirely disorganized, and would not obey orders.

"I reckon the only thing to be done with 'em, then," said the mayor, "is to git 'em clear back across the bridge. If we git 'em there out o' range, it seems to me we ought to be able to bring 'em into order ag'in."

"An excellent idea, Mr. Mayor," said the lieutenant-colonel. "Let us do so by all means. What do you say, Colonel?"

The colonel said nothing but nodded his head.

The call "To the rear, march," was sounded, and most of the soldiers obeyed. There was, however, a residuum who disregarded the call.

Among the men in the side street were some whose cartridge-boxes were either full, or had been only

partially emptied by loans to comrades. The owners of these boxes preferred to remain where they were rather than take the risk of retreating down the avenue.

There were others who could not be induced to relinquish their noisy pretence of continuing the attack on the insurgent works, and who denounced the signal to retreat as "shameful."

When the main body had crossed the bridge the order was given to halt. They were out of all danger there; for the avenue bent just before reaching the bridge, but they could hear the firing. They halted, and gathered around the mayor and the two field-officers. The mayor addressed the officers:

"Well, gents, I reckon you can get the boys in order now. Just see if you can't do it, if you don't mind obligin' me so fur."

The task was accomplished; but it took time. The company officers were sought out, and shown where to form their men, and although some confusion occurred, the demoralized crowd was sorted into shape, and the four companies formed in line.

This done, officers were then despatched to bring in the stragglers and an order from the colonel was sent to the armory directing the major to come to the scene of conflict with the two companies held in reserve, leaving the building in charge of the officer of the guard and a dozen soldiers.

The officer who had been sent to bring in the men who had remained to fight it out had no difficulty in so doing. The soldiers having used their last cartridges, had retreated under cover, and the

rioters had concluded not to waste their ammunition.

Some of the men demanded a supply of fresh cartridges; but as no supply was forthcoming, and as most of them were quite ready to retire, they all followed the officer back and were re-distributed among their companies. Before the reinforcements arrived all but about thirty of the original two hundred were once more available for service. The arrival of a hundred fresh men made the appearance of the military array so formidable, that the colonel decided to reconsider his determination to send in his resignation. The mayor, who had never before had so many men under his command, viewed the force with great satisfaction.

“Now, gents,” he said, addressing the officers, “I reckon we’re about ready to clean out *Ætna* Square. The trouble has been, that we went at this thing in too much of a slap-dash style, without lookin’ enough where we were goin’. This time we’ll do it circumspect, and we’ll clean ‘em out, never you fear.

“An’ now, colonel, if you’ll just swing round them companies on the right and left, so as to form three sides of a holler square; I’d like to say a few words to the boys, afore we start ‘em off.”

The desired formation was accomplished, the mayor took his place on the vacant side, and spoke.

“Colonel, and gentlemen o’ the Thirty-third Regiment. I greatly regret the necessity that has brought us all here to-night. It ain’t pleasant to have to shoot down one’s feller creeturs, but of course when it has to be done fur the gen’ral welfare, there ain’t

no gettin' out of it. I did hope to 'a' settle this affair with a mere show o' force, an' without no bloodshed, but it seems it can't be. We ain't goin' to have no monkey-business about this time, but we're goin' to walk right into 'em an' do 'em up. We've had all the nonsense out of 'em to-night that we're goin' to stand, and when we go fur 'em, this time, we mean business. Now, all you've got to do is just to keep cool an' mind your officers. I won't deny there's been some confusion to-night because some o' you boys was a little too previous. So just don't get excited and do as you're told. Now I didn't come here to talk, so I'll just say one word more an' stop. The reptyation o' this regiment rests with every man in it, and the regiment expects every man to do his dooty. An' now, Colonel, give your orders."

The mayor had just finished speaking, when a young man stepped in front of the colonel and saluted. The colonel returned the salute. The young man spoke.

"Sir, I have a favor to ask."

"Indeed, sir, and what is it?"

"The foremost position in the attacking column."

The old officer drew himself up, and answered with mild dignity.

"That place, sir, belongs to me; but, as I am pleased with the spirit that you show, I will share that position with you. You may take your place at my right hand, and in a line with me."

"Thank you, sir."

Victor Laford was not a specially brave man, but he had what was a very fair substitute for courage.

He was a millionaire, an officer, and a Laford. He was proud, and he knew that the part he had played at the time of the supposed dynamite plot had been commented on. He was passionate, and he was full of rage at the rioters for the destruction of his father's property. He was strong-willed, and determined to win credit for himself, and bring vengeance on the rebels. He had been infuriated beyond measure by the retreat of the soldiers. He had even used the flat of his sword on several very respectable young persons more accustomed to the use of the pen. The resolute tone of the mayor had given him encouragement; it did seem to "mean business," and he was resolved to take a leading part in the "business" referred to.

The regiment got in motion. The men wheeled by fours to the right, marched over the bridge, and moved up the street until they reached the bend; there, they halted. Laford placed himself in the position promised him, alongside the colonel. The latter faced about, and gave the command to charge, and one of the captains added the caution to shout. The bugle screamed a weird accompaniment; and, in a moment, the rifles of the rebels joined in. The line of fire broke out from the darkness up the street, and went out again. Two soldiers went down, but the rest went on. The captain of the first company saw the colonel stumbling and struggling, and leaped forward to catch him. Too late. The old gentleman fell. What was play to the vigorous young men behind him was very near death to him. That rush up

the street sent the blood to his head and no bullet was required to drop him.

The men saw their commanding officer fall, but they never faltered. Laford feared that they would, but a glance over his shoulder reassured him. He saw them at his heels like a pack of hounds in full cry. The ranks had broken, but this time they broke forward. The captain was swallowed in the crowd; but not so, Laford. He was the champion sprinter of the Arimathean Club and was firmly resolved to be the first man over the barricade.

It was quick work, scarcely fifteen seconds in all. They wondered afterwards how they could have been so stupid as to stand and be shot at when it was so much more agreeable to have it all over within an instant. Every spurt of fire from the barricade showed ten yards nearer. Presently they saw it loom up through the misty darkness, black and silent. They could see no row of heads and weapons along the top of it. It was all the more formidable on that account, because of the danger it might conceal. It took nerve to tackle that shadowy Anarchist fortress; but Laford was equal to the task. He went at it like a game hunter at a five-barred gate; went at it and up it, and stood on the top.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IT will now be necessary to turn back the hands on the dial of history to the point where they were when the exchange of shots ceased to be such, and the rioters finding that they were getting no return for their outlay of powder and lead, ceased to fire into the empty air.

In the exuberance of his joy, Ardetti leaped on the barricade, waved his hat and shouted "Victory."

The others responded in kind, and their voices, following the cessation of firing announced far and wide that the assault had been repelled. Men returned to the barricade, a few at first, walking; then more and more, running. There were innumerable hand shakings and congratulations, and shouts of triumph, so that the sound reached the ears of the soldiers while reforming their ranks beyond the bridge.

Nomanson stood leaning against the barricade, the centre of an admiring semi-circle. He shook hands with the most demonstrative and answered what questions were put to him; but otherwise seemed to pay little attention to them.

Half an hour past, and there was no sign of any further movement on the part of the enemy. The opinion was loudly expressed in all quarters that they had had enough.

Among those who formed the semi-circle was the ragged street urchin. He said little, but edged closer to his chosen leader and gazed at him steadily.

Nomanson seemed to rouse himself from a reverie.

"Youngster, you seem to have plenty of nerve. Have you got enough to sneak down the street like a rat when the cat's around, and see what has become of the soldiers."

"Guess I have, boss."

"Go ahead, then."

The stunted figure went over the barricade and vanished in the darkness. In a few minutes he was back again, with his report.

"They ain't gone home yet, boss. They're all on the other side of the bridge. They was all ranged in three rows like that, an' somebody inside speakin' to 'em. An' I thought ye'd want to know right away so I come to tell ye."

The noise of the mob subsided perceptibly as this information was passed from mouth to mouth. More men were seen going away than coming. The crowd grew thinner steadily.

Nomanson sent the boy back again.

When the scout returned this time it was at a run.

"They's comin' this time, boss, an' no mistake. They's all across the river, just around the bend o' the street. I guess they's waitin' for some more to come 'fore they start."

A hoarse murmur spread through the crowd until it reached the outskirts. There was no more loud talk or hurrahing. The boy went on.

"I'm givin' it to ye straight, guv'nor. They's all ready to go for us again. The colonel and young Mr. Laford they was in front with their swords, and—"

Nomanson interrupted him sharply.

"Are you sure of that? Did you see Victor Laford in front of them?"

"Yes, guv'nor, sure. I know'm well. I blacked his boots onc't down to the Central Hotel."

The rebels saw their young leader's teeth gleam as he took his rifle from where he had left it leaning against the barricade.

"All of you that are afraid had better get away from here," he said. "The fun is going to begin again."

A prolonged shout from a hundred throats came up the street like a tidal wave. Some of the rioters began to run. Others seized their weapons and fired down the street. The volley was answered by a louder outburst of cheering. With fingers that seemed paralyzed in their desperate haste those of the rebels who stood firm continued the fire, but no shot came from their chief. He stood with rifle cocked and ready, waiting.

From the smoke and darkness emerged a figure, coming at the barricade on a run. A slim and lithe figure in a jaunty fatigue coat; with cap on one side; and, above it, a dully glimmering sword. Close behind, a rushing crowd of dark forms and a hundred flashes of steel.

"My God!" cried one of the rioters, "here they are, right on us."

In an instant, Nomanson was alone. He saw his comrades melt into the darkness to right and left of him, but he had no inclination to join them. With a deadly weapon in his hands and the son of his enemy in his reach, he had something of more importance on hand than to look out for his own safety.

The young officer was close to the rude breast-work. He stopped for an instant, rested one hand on a convenient sack, and vaulted lightly to the summit. The soft footing gave a little under him as he rose to his feet. He staggered slightly; then stood firm.

A stream of fire came from the darkness behind the barricade. A sound like the snap of a heavy whip rang above the hoarse shouts of the panting soldiers. The officer reeled back; his sword clashed on the stones; and he rolled down the pile of stuffed sacks to the bottom.

The on-coming soldiers heard a laugh from within. For one awful moment they expected a sheet of flame in their faces, but they never faltered. They had gone too far to go back, and a kind of mental momentum sent them on. A moment more and they swarmed over the breast-work—to find it deserted.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

NOMANSON walked away through the darkness with his empty rifle under his arm. He had no more cartridges; but he had a loaded revolver in his hip pocket. He kept a sharp lookout ahead, but doggedly refused to cast a glance behind him. Whether he was followed or not he would not quicken his pace.

There was no attempt at pursuit. The rebels seemed to have vanished into the darkness, no one knew where. None of the soldiers cared to go in search of them individually, and order had to be restored before any concerted action could be taken.

He had gone only a short distance when he perceived some one approaching. Instinctively he stopped and his hand went to the butt of his revolver. It was a woman. Then he heard Vera's voice.

"So, you are safe, after all."

"I seem to be for the present."

She came to his side and they walked on together.

"And how is it that you made up your mind to come away. Why did you not stay there, you magnificent fool, and fight until they killed you?"

"I only stayed for a last shot. I had a bullet in my rifle, and I sent it into the first man that mounted the barricade."

"But you had a pistol full of bullets. Why did

you not stay to empty that into the rest of them, and give them a chance to stick you full of bayonet holes?"

"I didn't altogether enjoy the idea of it. I thought I'd rather live to fight another day. If I can get out of it now I am going to. What has become of the others?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

They continued together to the other end of the square. When they came near the Eighth Street barricade they saw the red flag planted on it, and the crest was lined with faces. They were hailed with acclamations, and, climbing over, found themselves among friends. A dozen of the fugitives had rallied there. They pressed around their regained leader anxiously, to hear what he had to say. He stood listlessly leaning on his rifle; and said nothing until Elise put her hand on his shoulder and spoke, "Well, my General, what are your orders?"

He looked at her dreamily, then seemed to rouse himself, and answered:

"I have no orders to give."

"Eh?"

"Yes," he answered smiling. "The general resigns and the army is disbanded. We've done what we set out to do and the best thing now is to go home. Still, if you want to do any more shooting, I'll stand in with you."

Nobody cared to do any more of it; and Ardetti proposed that they should adjourn to Oelschlager's saloon and celebrate the victory, and the field was abandoned to the state forces.

They found the saloon closed, but they succeeded in gaining admission. They put the little tables together in the back room so as to form one long one, and Nomanson was voted into the place of honor, with the red flag set against the wall behind him, and the two women to right and left of him. Vera was the only one who had received a wound in the Cause and that was, so to speak, at the hands of her friends. A vicious kick from her rifle had given her a cut on the chin, and the blood had run down her neck, exposed by the tearing open of her dress, when in the heat of firing, it had seemed as if a moment's delay meant strangulation. They celebrated the victory with much talk and laughter and song; while they slaked, in copious draughts of wine and beer, the thirst that heat and exertion and excitement and powder smoke had made seem greater than any thirst that ever was on sea or land. Several drank too much; but not so the "reds," for a drunken Anarchist is rarer than an Apteryx.

But Nomanson sat among them, as it were, in a stupor, looking straight ahead into space, and only speaking when spoken to; scarcely appearing to hear their praises and compliments, responding languidly when they drank his health; and at last, saying that he was tired, he rose. The celebration broke up then and Nomanson went home with Stamm, who happened to possess a double bed, promising to meet the party again at midday.

On their way they passed within sight of the square. The barricades were still there, but sentinels were posted in front of them, and behind were other sol-

diers standing and sitting at ease, and stacks of arms, glittering in the morning sun. The forces of law and order seemed to be satisfied with occupying the insurgent position ; and, securely ensconced there to be awaiting developments.

The two rebels coolly stopped and surveyed the enemy for a while. Some other citizens were engaged in similar observation. There were some threats and denunciations at street corners, but the concourse had not yet become numerous or bold enough to have reached the stone-throwing stage.

Many of the people recognized Nomanson, who finding that he was becoming a centre of attraction, went on. He did not escape in this way, however ; but was followed by a constantly increasing body of men and boys. Thus accompanied he arrived at Stamm's lodgings. After he had gone in, they lingered for a while, looking at the front of the house. As some left, others arrived, so that the young hero of the night's combat took his much-needed rest, as it were, under guard of his sympathizers.

CHAPTER XXXV.

WHEN Nomanson awoke he lay for some time trying to recollect what had awakened him. The sun was blazing into the room, and a swarm of flies kept up a steady buzz like the sound of a distant city. They were walking over his companion's face, as he lay in the glaring sunlight with the perspiration standing in beads on his forehead. Presently, above the buzzing of the flies, there seemed to be an unusual noise in the street.

Nomanson had had all the sleep he wanted. He remembered the appointment for midday, and looked at his watch. But, for the first time in four years, he had forgotten to wind it, and it had run down.

He thrust into his pocket the six-shooter that had become his constant companion, and went downstairs. A number of men and boys in front of the house were talking excitedly.

As soon as he appeared, the noise increased. Several men rushed forward and shook him by the hand; among them a man whom he recognized as a liquor dealer of local political influence.

So many of them were talking at once that he found it difficult to make out what they were talking about, and, hoping to learn, he gave his whole attention to this man. Thus, he discovered that Iron City was in a state of siege. Martial law had been

proclaimed, and the military had taken possession of the town. While he was willing to admit that this was a high-handed outrage, he could not conscientiously accede to the further proposition that there was a uniformed hireling of plutocracy at every street corner; for he saw several street corners, but no uniforms of any kind.

When his attention was called to the fact that the workingmen of America were being shot down at that moment, he remembered what it was that had awakened him. It was a shot.

No one seemed to know who had fired the shot, or where it had been fired. The belief was that it had come from the direction of the river. Towards the river, therefore, he went with a throng at his heels.

They met a crowd carrying a wounded man, said to be a peaceable citizen who had been shot for expressing an opinion not altogether agreeable to the minions of capital, but, as several boasted of having broken the heads of some of the minions, it was plain that the shot had been a reply to something harder than hard words.

The fracas was evidently at an end; and the rioters driven from the field. However, Nómanson went on, with a constantly increasing band of followers, until he came in sight of the South bridge, now in the possession of a party of soldiers. Going around then to the North bridge, he found that also guarded. He smiled with a kind of grim approval. The person in command of the militia evidently understood what he was about. The three cities were cut off from each other.

He ther made his way to Oelschlager's, where he found the Anarchist conclave in session, and in a cloud of tobacco smoke. As he entered, Vera was leaning back in her chair and blowing rings in the air. Lieckiwitz was talking, and pounding the table with his fist until the bottles and glasses rang. Nomanson sat down, took up a copy of the *Gazette*, and began to read.

CIVIL WAR.

The Battle of Iron City.

Two hours of firing ends in a bayonet charge.

The rioters driven from the field in confusion.

Two soldiers dead, and six wounded, two mortally.

Loss of the rioters unknown.

Can the Governor any longer refuse to put an end to this state of affairs ?

He had just finished reading the headings when Lieckiwitz paused to swallow a glass of beer, and Ardetti took the place he had occupied in the conversation. Nomanson listened for a few minutes, and then his eye wandered again to the paper, and struck the top of a column.

“ Finding his authority thus openly defied, the mayor had no alternative. He must meet force with force. He therefore drove back to where the regiment was stationed and gave the word to advance. Headed by their gallant colonel, the troops advanced with spirit. They were met by a hot fire from the intrenched rioters, to which they replied with telling effect. But the odds of numbers and of position

were too great ; and, after an obstinate conflict, the soldiers were compelled to retreat ; which they did slowly ; disputing every step of the way. At the North bridge, they were met by a reinforcement of about one hundred men, commanded by Major Thornton. Thus aided, they were shortly enabled to turn the tables on the strikers. The mob made a desperate resistance, but the soldiers were more than equally resolute ; scaling the barricade, in spite of shots and blows, and dispersing the rioters, at the point of the bayonet.

“ It was during this final mêlée that perhaps the saddest loss of the whole conflict occurred. Lieutenant Victor Laford, Adjutant of the Battalion, and son of John C. Laford, Esq., one of our best known and most respected citizens, had, with a most praiseworthy zeal in the cause of his state and country, requested from his commanding officer a position at the head of the storming party. His request was granted, and, after leading his men with the most admirable courage, he was the first to ascend the barricade ; and, for a moment, was compelled to encounter the rioters alone. Before his comrades could arrive to his assistance, he fell back, shot through the body, and, when the victory had been won he was found to have breathed his last. The sympathy of all our townsmen goes forth spontaneously to the bereaved family——”

Nomanson was about to turn the page when a shot from the street broke the thread of Ardetti’s discourse. There was a rush to learn what had happened. It proved to be nothing more interesting than a drunken man with a shotgun, showing some incredulous person that his weapon was capable of taking part in the defense of the liberties of American workingmen. The excitement subsided and the

party returned to their beer and exchange of opinions.

Nomanson's opinion had not been asked, and he seemed quite willing to keep it to himself. He picked up the Gazette again, and glanced through it. Before long he found something of deeper interest.

“ASSIGNMENT OF LAFORD & Co.

“We regret to be obliged to announce that one of our most distinguished and wealthy citizens has been forced by the present labor troubles into a temporary embarrassment. Mr. John Laford announced this morning that he had assigned his entire property for the benefit of his creditors to John Moore, of the firm of Moore & Stymus. Owing to the sad misfortune which overtook the family last night, it was impossible to interview Mr. Laford in regard to this matter. In an interview with his assignee, Mr. Moore, the latter gentleman stated that Mr. Laford had been endeavoring to negotiate a mortgage on the James Street factory in order to meet a note which came due yesterday. The destruction of the factory, of course, made this impossible; and resulted in the assignment above mentioned. Mr. Moore believes that the trouble is only temporary, and that Mr. Laford will soon be as prosperous as ever. In having to record two such misfortunes in one issue
—”

Nomanson had reached the end of the page. He did not turn it over, but sat looking at the wall. He heard the voices of the men and the two women, but he had no thought for what they were saying, until Vera addressed him directly.

At first, her words conveyed no meaning. But,

presently, seeing that she was waiting for an answer, he remembered what she had said. It was not particularly brilliant, and very far from original, and he always met it with a stereotyped answer.

"A penny for your thoughts," he remembered her to have said.

His answer was, "Show me first your penny."

She laughed, and produced a one cent piece and offered it to him.

"Do you call that a penny?" he said.

"Why yes. Don't you?"

"No."

"Eh! What do you call it, then?"

"A cent."

"But that is the same thing."

"No, only half."

She looked at him with raised eye brows.

"Oh! You are mean. You make fun of me because I do not speak good English. But seriously, tell me what you were thinking of."

He answered her slowly: "I was thinking that I half believed there must be a devil. I have had such a run of luck that it don't seem natural,—what you might call the devil's own luck; and no mistake."

His smile, as he said this was not the joyous smile of the night before.

"Tell me about your good luck."

"I didn't say it was good luck. It was luck of some kind, but maybe it wasn't good. Perhaps I will tell you about it this evening. I don't know. I want to be by myself, so that I can think."

Taking up his hat he went to the door. Several asked where he was going. He said to get some fresh air. As he went out, he heard one of them saying that it was cooler inside. It was very hot outside, but he scarcely noticed it. In spite of the heat, some men were loitering about the saloon. Several stepped forward, offering him their hands. Others came up to hear what he had to say.

He got rid of them as soon as possible, saying that he was going over to New Manchester to see what was going on there. Several offered their services, but he declined them. Nevertheless, he was accompanied by three men and six boys.

He went to a boathouse, where he had been accustomed, when in an extravagant humor, to hire boats at twenty-five cents for the day. He secured one, and allowed one of his would-be assistants to help him row it across the river, and leaving it there in his charge, he proceeded at once to St. Joseph's Place.

That day like the preceding, was breathless. The air over the white road quivered in the heat. No one was in sight but a solitary horseman, coming on at an easy gallop. He proved to be a mounted policeman, who looked hard at Nomanson,—the latter returning his look—and went on in the direction of the armory.

Nomanson continued his walk until opposite the Laford house. The damage done by the rioters to the once smoothly-kept lawn, had not yet been repaired. There was no sign of life about the house. The window blinds were down.

After a prolonged inspection, he went slowly back to where he had left the boat. It was then sunset. The man left in charge was watching the other side of the river. He said, "I guess we'd better not go back to Al's boathouse."

"Why not?"

"Look across there and you'll see."

Several men in blue coats and fatigue caps were standing on the float.

"They seem to be waiting for us," he said.

"Looks like it."

"I guess we'd better leave the boat here for the present, and go over after dark. We can run up the North Ford and land somewhere without their seeing us. Come over to Locustown and get some dinner. They'll think we've left the town for good, then ; and we can come back in a couple of hours."

The invitation was accepted, and the two walked along North Street. It was dusk when they came in sight of the Turnpike Avenue bridge. The dark arch of the bridge was thrown across the shining water ; and along the parapet were the black silhouettes of men in fatigue caps and rifles with fixed bayonets.

The two champions of the rights of the American workingman retraced their steps, dinnerless, to where they had left the boat. In the darkness they got back to Iron City unobserved, and Nomanson made his way to Oelschlager's. The saloon was dark and a group of men and boys across the street were watching two sentinels in front of the door.

He then sought the lodging of the two women

whom he found at home. Stamm and Ardetti were there, too. The subject discussed was, of course, the tyranny of capital, and, then as it was very hot, they proposed a walk near the river. Vera took Nomanson's arm, and drew him a little behind the others.

"Now," she whispered, "you promised that you would tell me. I am listening."

After some thought, he said: "Very well, I will tell you; and then perhaps you can tell *me* something."

"I!—well I can try to. Go on."

"I came here because I hated John Laford. I came a thousand miles because I wanted to have revenge on him; and I have got it."

"I suspected as much."

"I thought very likely you had. You knew I burnt his factories; and perhaps you guessed that the man into whom I put my last shot was his son."

"Ah! No, I did know that his son was killed, but I did not know that you killed him."

"I did. Well, that's what I meant by saying I had had the devil's own luck. Don't it look so to you?"

"Bah! I never speak of the devil except for a joke. He is not to be taken seriously. Well, then, why did you hate this man Laford? What had he ever done to you?"

"That is a family matter—" he laughed unmirthfully.—"I would rather say nothing about it. I rather doubt whether you would understand it. Now see if you can tell me what *I* want to know."

“I will try.”

“Why is it, after waiting, and longing, and dreaming of this for a year; after hoping for it against hope; after as good as throwing away my life for it —for I don’t believe I’ll ever get out of this scrape alive,—after all this, why is it that now when I’ve got what I longed for and hoped for and fought for, I don’t want it?”

“Ah!”

“Somehow I can’t seem to believe it myself, and yet it is so. I have no satisfaction in it. Yes, I would undo it if I could. Men can do a lot; but when it comes to undoing, they can’t do much.”

“You are nervous. Two such nights are enough to upset any one who is not used to it.”

He went on as if he hadn’t heard her.

“The fellow had never injured me, and he had everything that he wanted to make his life dear to him; and his mother is a good woman. I’ve taken his life, and ruined his mother’s for nothing. I’ve made them pay a terrible price for what I don’t care a cent about, now I’ve got it.”

She stopped, and slapped him on the shoulder.

“Brace up, man. Are there not hundreds of sons as dear as he to their mothers being slowly ground to death to fill the coffers of the plutocracy?”

He seemed not to hear her, for when he spoke his words were no answer to hers.

“I’m glad, now, that I never would do anything to revenge myself except in the way of duty. I made up my mind to that and I stuck to it. I didn’t burn Laford’s factories because they were his,

but to keep them from being run by dagoes. I didn't kill his son because he was his, but because he was leading a gang of soldiers to break up a workingman's meeting. What I did, I did in a just cause and in a fair fight—that I know!"

"You are right. What would you have then? Ah! I know; a bottle of Rhine wine.

"For there's naught to cheer
The hearts that pine
Like the deep, deep draught
Of the goo—od Rhi—ine wine."

Those ahead then joined in, and they went on towards the river, singing.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Most of the inhabitants of Iron City slept very little that night.

The town was virtually under martial law. The soldiers, gaining confidence every hour, had gradually taken possession of all the strategic points. The main body still lay in the position that they had wrested from the insurgents the night before; while pickets and patrols were thrown out in all directions. This was not accomplished without some resistance, such as throwing of stones and bricks and constructing a barricade of four carts, a lumber wagon, and omnibus which had to be taken by storm. In the course of the skirmishing, several soldiers were injured. But the militia quelled the ardor of their assailants by shooting two or three of them on purpose, and five or six by mistake.

With the darkness, however, the spirit of rebellion revived, and isolated soldiers and groups of soldiers, once more became targets. When this occurred they generally fired in the direction from which the missile was supposed to have come. Thus, the citizens who did go to sleep, found their slumbers somewhat disturbed.

When the party separated for the night, Nomanson and Stamm, with whom he was to sleep, accepted an invitation to breakfast with the two women.

On the way next morning, they encountered a party of men and boys hooting and cursing at the approach of a squad of militia. The soldiers were marching along the sidewalk by twos, and Nomanson and his companion stood aside to let them pass. The civilians hailed him with half articulate shouts, and pointed him out to each other. As they passed, every soldier eyed him.

When they had passed, he found himself the centre of a group of eager faces. It was evident that a word from him would precipitate another disturbance. But he looked around the circle indifferently, and walked on, meeting no interruption. After breakfast, Nomanson threw himself into the shabby armchair by the window, his favorite place. Elise and Stamm went out to reconnoitre. Nomanson was not enough interested to go, and Vera stayed to keep him company. She rolled a cigarette, and smoked. He appreciated the luxury of not being alone, and yet being let alone.

When she had finished her cigarette, she spoke, at last.

“Laford’s son is to be buried to-day.”

Nomanson nodded.

“Why do you care. You know what he was. A worthless parasite, and worse, a vicious one. A would-be betrayer of the virtue of an innocent girl.”

“I agree with you. I thought out the whole business beforehand. I don’t blame myself. But isn’t it queer that I don’t care.”

“Well, henceforth think less of yourself. A great

and glorious cause claims you. Give yourself to that. Forget your private wrongs. That is the true manhood, the true patriotism. Come now, it is strange, is it not? I, a Russian, have come from under the tyranny of the White Czar, to teach you, an American citizen, that your true happiness lies in giving yourself to the cause of freedom."

He made no answer, but sat watching a squad of soldiers marching down the street. He watched them listlessly until they came opposite to the house, when a change of movement aroused his attention. The head of the little column turned and crossed the street. At the front door, it halted. Vera started up. He rose, and stretched himself.

"They seem to be coming here," he said.

"Quick," she whispered hoarsely. "There is yet time. Go by the back door, across and through. I will go down to the front door and meet them. I will hold them for half a minute. Quick."

"But perhaps they are after you, too."

"Bah! no. I am but a woman. What would they want with me. Go, quick."

She pushed him towards the door. There came a loud ring at the door-bell. He ran down, and she followed him. At the foot of the stairs he turned and went to the back of the house. She went to the front door.

A servant, the only one in the house, appeared at the head of the basement stairs, to answer the bell. Vera waved her hand.

The ring came again louder than before. Still the servant remained irresolute, and Vera stood between

her and the door. Nomanson had passed out into the yard.

For the third time the bell sounded, accompanied by loud knocking, and a voice demanding that the door should be opened.

Vera beckoned the woman forward to open the door. A man in citizen's dress, backed by a group of soldiers, still roughly arranged in fours, as they had ascended the steps, held out a paper and spoke from under a huge black moustache.

"I want a man named John Nomanson. I understand he's in this house. Here's a warrant for his arrest. Where is he?"

"I—I think—I don't know. Perhaps this young lady knows. I think——"

"He is not here," interrupted Vera, speaking with serene composure. "He was here this morning, but he went away an hour ago. I think he said that he was going to Twenty-eighth Street to see a friend of his named Robertson."

"That's all right, young woman, but it won't work. I saw the man myself at the window, just before I came in."

"I assure you, sir, that you are mistaken. The man you saw is another person. His name is Jones. He is a friend of mine and frequently calls here. He is upstairs now."

"All right, I'll just go up and interview Mr. Jones."

"I object to your entering my room, sir."

"Sorry, but I've got to."

"You shall not."

"Oh, yes, I shall."

"Where is your authority?"

"Right here." He held up the paper and pointed to it.

"Let me see it."

"No you don't, my girl, it's all right and that's enough for you. Just get out of the way and let me pass."

"You shall *not*. You shall not enter my room without my leave. It is an outrage. Do you call this a land of freedom where such things can be done? Search the rest of the house if you like, that is no affair of mine. But enter my room you shall not."

"Sorry but I guess we'll have to."

The man endeavored to push by. Vera suddenly rushed upstairs. They heard her slam a door and lock it. The man with the warrant winked sagaciously at the officer in command of the squad, saying; "I guess we know just where to look for him now." The latter nodded. With the sheriff's officer at their head the soldiers trooped upstairs. A demand to open and a threat to break down the door was made, and then a series of loud thumps resounded through the house, followed by a crash.

Meanwhile Nomanson had scaled the back fence, and reached the back door of the house on the next street. This he opened just in time to see the front door open revealing a squad of men in blue.

He turned quickly, and scaled the fence into the yard of the next house. As he reached the steps to

this back door a soldier appeared at the one from which he had just fled.

Half a dozen rifles covered him and as many voices called on him to surrender. He sprang up the steps. A volley, and he disappeared into the house.

Some of the soldiers started in pursuit, others in the opposite direction to head him off. There was no need of hurry, however. When he entered the house he knew that all hope of escape was gone.

This conviction was brought home to him by a peculiar and not at all agreeable sensation in his leg. The man who had ascended the eight steps in two bounds limped slowly through the hall and up the staircase. He stopped there. There was no use in going on. He had made up his mind what to do, and it might as well be done there. Five feet from the head of the stairway he halted, and drew his six-shooter.

Half a dozen soldiers had entered the house from the rear, and as many from the front. They saw the fugitive at the head of the stairs, and they collected in a group at the foot.

Nomanson felt no pain, but his leg was numb, and heavy, as if he had received a blow from a large stone or club. He could feel the hot blood slowly running down into his shoe. Although ignorant of strategy and tactics, he had been shrewd enough to take advantage of the "military crest" of the staircase; so that, while his assailants were in plain sight, his head and shoulders only could be seen. So he stood, waiting for the attack.

It was not given immediately. The militiamen knew the character of the man they had to deal with, and were inclined to "strain courtesy, which should cope him first." The officer with them was an undecided youth who greatly enjoyed the process of living, and he stood irresolute, his sword in one hand, and the other mechanically stroking his incipient moustache. However, seeing that his men expected him to lead the way, he took one step upwards.

"See here, my man," he said, "you'd better come down, you know. You can't get away, and you may as well give in now as any time. You'd a great deal better come down and not make any trouble."

The set face at the top of the stairs lightened a little. The reply came in a tone of genial mockery.

"I think it's hardly fair to ask me to come to you after putting a bullet in my leg. If you knew how inconvenient you've made it for me to walk, you wouldn't expect me to."

"Oh! come now, it was your own fault, you know. If you had surrendered when we told you to it wouldn't have happened, you know."

The simplicity of the officer's reply made Nomanson laugh outright, as he answered:

"I acknowledge that, captain, but I really must beg to be excused from coming down. If you want me you'll have to come and get me."

The officer took another step upwards, and stopped again, suddenly; for the six-shooter of the desperate rebel covered him. Then the house reverberated and the hall was full of smoke. Rifles and revolver

answered each other. A soldier went down. Three retreated out of range to reload. One, who had not fired walked quietly half way up the staircase, and stood there, finger on trigger. A sergeant stepped up to his side, reloading. The firing was over for the moment. Two more soldiers started to ascend the stair. From the smoke-cloud in the upper hall came another shot. The man beside the sergeant dropped in a heap. The two soldiers turned and took two leaps down among their comrades.

The sergeant had fitted a fresh cartridge and stood waiting for the smoke to clear. Whether he would live to see it clear was a question that interested him deeply, but time alone could answer that. He was a healthy young man, earning a good salary, and the only support of a mother, wife, and baby. Naturally he hoped that the question would be answered favorably.

The smoke was clearing. The sergeant peered into it with an eagerness that grew more painful with every second. Suddenly his anxiety was dispelled. With a soldierly instinct he dropped the hammer of his rifle to half-cock, and walked upstairs.

He had seen, hanging limply over the top step, a hand, still loosely holding a revolver.

Nomanson lay on his face where he had dropped, after crawling forward to fire his last shot. The sergeant stood beside him looking down at him and the others trooped up the stairs and grouped themselves around him. For a half minute the rings of smoke curled slowly upwards amidst silence and stillness.

Then a wounded man below called feebly for help; and the hysterical shrieks of a woman resounded through the house from one of the upper rooms. The spell was broken. Some of the soldiers went to attend to their comrades, while others carried the prostrate rebel down, with his blood dripping on every stair.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE sheriff's officer and his uniformed posse comitatus, had smashed in the door of the room occupied by the two women and proceeded to pull things to pieces generally. They upset the bed, threw the mattress on the floor, pulled out the garments hanging in the closet, and strewed them about the room; turned the sofa upside down; opened two formidable-looking trunks, and dragged out their miscellaneous contents; looked behind the curtain; and finally convinced themselves that the man they wanted was not there.

As soon as the door was burst in Vera had quietly left the room, and had run downstairs. She locked the back door and took the key. Then to the basement and out by the back door of the kitchen, locking that behind her also.

She witnessed the beginning of the combat between Nomanson and his pursuers, and when she heard the firing cease inside the house, she had very little doubt as to the result. Still the thought uppermost in her mind was to learn the exact truth; so she crossed the yard, and, at the cost of a badly torn dress, succeeded in getting over the fence. She had just made good her descent when two soldiers issued from the house, carrying between them the apparently lifeless body of a man in civilian dress, without a coat.

If anyone had asked the two militiamen why they had carried their fallen enemy to the back yard, they would have found it hard to tell. Probably they were prompted by the general idea that the best thing to do with a man that is unconscious is to take him into the open air and to dash water in his face; for they were kindly and good-natured young men, and bore no malice against the wounded rebel.

So they carried him down to the little grass-plot as gently as though he had been one of their own men he had just shot; and laid him down there. One remained by him, and the other went for water. Several others came and inspected him with much the same curiosity that hunters feel in viewing the body of a dead lion.

Through this little circle Vera suddenly forced her way. She threw herself on her knees beside the unconscious form of the young man, and tore open his shirt. It was soaked with blood, and spots of it were to be seen on the clothes of the men who had been carrying him. Her hands were instantly dyed in it. She felt for his heart, and found it still beating. Then in a wild agony of joy, she uttered an incoherent exclamation in her own language, bent down, and pressed her lips to his.

Never before in his life, had Nomanson felt a woman's passionate love-kiss. The sensation was so strange that, weak and stupefied as he was it made him open his eyes.

She kissed him again, on the hand, this time; and, holding it in both hers began to rock her body back and forth, sobbing violently, and speaking brokenly,

in Russian. He felt her tears burning on his face. He closed his eyes, and pressed her hand.

"Don't cry," he murmured feebly. "Where's the use. I'm not worth it."

She returned the pressure, and shook her head, but still could find no words that he could understand. Presently, the soldier who had gone for water came back with a cup full. Seeing that the wounded man was conscious, he did not throw the water in his face, but stood holding it, uncertain what to do, when a surgeon arrived. It had been expected that this arrest would not be made without bloodshed, and three surgeons with an ambulance were promptly on hand. The one who came to attend Nomanson was a young man, eager for an opportunity to exercise his skill. He knelt down and proceeded to examine the wounds with promptness and despatch.

A number of questions were asked but he vouchsafed no answer until an older surgeon who had finished with his case, approached and inquired, "what do you make of it?"

"Seems to be a tough case. Two wounds, one in right leg and one in right breast. Wound in leg don't amount to much, mere flesh wound; small bone may be fractured, possibly. Wound in chest seems to have touched the lung. Bad hemorrhage. If it hadn't stopped, itself, he wouldn't be alive now. How's yours?"

"My man is all right. A bullet struck him on the side of the skull and glanced off, luckily for him, inflicting a mere contused wound. Of course there's danger of concussion of the brain, but I think he'll

come out all right. When you've got your patient bandaged have him carried right out to the ambulance. I want to get all three to the hospital as soon as possible."

"This man is not to go to the hospital," interposed Vera, looking up and holding the hand she held tighter. "He is not friendless and alone in the world; I will take care of him."

The young surgeon paid no attention to her, but went on bandaging the wound. But not so the sheriff's officer, who had just arrived on the scene.

"No you don't, young woman. This man is a prisoner and he's going to the hospital or anywhere else I say. And what's more——"

Vera sprang to her feet with flashing eyes, and clenched hands. She faced the officer and looked him straight in the eye as she spoke.

"He shall not go to the hospital. He is the man I love, and I shall take care of him and nobody else. You shall *not* take him from me. Where I go he shall go."

"Not much, if I know it. He's going to the hospital and you're going with me. If you think, my girl, that incitin' folks to riot, and resisting an officer in the discharge o' his dooty, is things you can do whenever you feel like doin' 'em, it's time you found out your mistake. You're goin' to jail, that's where you goin'."

"I will die first!"

She looked to right and left like a hunted panther, and her hand went to her pocket. The officer had been expecting something of the kind, and he was

an old hand at the business of arresting criminals. With a pounce quick as a falcon's he had her by the wrists.

"No you don't, my girl. I've got you, you see, and it ain't no use your tryin' that game. Look in her pockets, one of you fellows. She's got a gun somewhere about her."

The soldiers hesitated a little. Then one stepped forward. With her teeth set hard, the woman made no desperate effort to free herself, but with the pain, and the sense of the indignity and her helplessness, she fainted.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IT was the day after the funeral of Victor Laford ; and, in a darkened room his mother sat, clad in black, her chin resting on her clenched hand, and her eyes staring straight before her. Her face shone white in the half-light and her eyes were red, but she shed no tears. They had been exhausted twenty-four hours ago.

She had given orders that she was not to be disturbed. She desired to give her whole attention to thinking of her lost son ; and would have no interference with her self-torture. But for all that, the door opened and a servant, a kindly-faced, elderly woman, entered, and with folded hands, and eyes cast down, waited until her mistress should give some sign of recognition of her presence.

Mrs. Laford looked up, and questioned the woman with her eyes.

“ I am sorry to disturb you, ma’am, and I wouldn’t have done it only I was afraid you wouldn’t like it, when you heard of it, if I didn’t. It’s a young woman, the same that was brought here through the snow, one night last winter ; and she’s takin’ on awful ; not much noise, that is ; but very bad all the same ; and wants to see you, and says you’re the only one that can help her, and if she waits it will be too late. And I’ve known you now these forty-five

years, all your life, and I was sure you wouldn't like it if you wasn't told."

Mrs. Laford answered in a dull and listless manner, speaking slowly and with difficulty, as though it was hard for her to think of the right words to use.

" You are right, Martha, I ought to see her, and I *will* see her. Some time, when I am able to feel ordinary things I will be grateful to you for all you have been to me through these four days."

The old woman's face twitched, and she left the room quickly. When she reappeared, she brought Frances with her. With a final whisper "don't stay long," in the girl's ear, she went out and closed the door. Frances remained by the door, nervously twisting her handkerchief, while her eyes wandered vacantly about the room, and her bosom heaved with a suppressed sob. Mrs. Laford was the first to speak.

" What can I do for you ? "

The girl's tears suddenly gushed out, and she faltered and tried in vain to speak. The older woman waited in silence. At last Frances succeeded in making herself intelligible.

" I—I feel—almost—as if it was wicked to intrude on you, ma'am ; but I'm in such trouble, and nobody else can help me, and you're so good, and I know you'll pardon me this time—and it's about a young man that was shot by the soldiers, and he's in the hospital—and they say he's dying, and they won't let me see him because I ain't a relation—and—and—would you be so kind as to give me a letter, or something—I know you're one of the lady patronesses of

the hospital—and they'd surely let me if you said so—and wouldn't you please, ma'am? Oh! I'd be so grateful if you would, and pray God to bless you every night of my life——”

“ You say you are no relation to this young man?”

“ Yes, ma'am.”

“ Why then, do you wish, so much, to see him?”

A faint blush suffused the girl's pale face.

“ We—we were friends.”

“ Is it the young man who brought you here the night of the snowstorm?”

Frances nodded.

Mrs. Laford sighed, and turned her eyes away. She reached for a bell that stood on the table, and struck it.

“ You shall see him,” she said. “ I will send my daughter with you. Now go downstairs, and wait.”

Frances left the room with a few half-articulate words of thanks.

Mrs. Laford summoned her carriage, and sent for Lillian.

When Miss Laford appeared, her mother was writing a note to the lady-superior of the hospital. She finished, addressed it, and sealed it.

“ I have sent for you to tell you that your father's son is lying in the hospital at the point of death. I thought you might like to know of it—before it was too late to see him.”

“ I would like to see him.”

“ I thought so. I have ordered the carriage. You had better take this with you.”

She handed Lillian the note, and added, “ it might

be as well to speak to your father of it. I would do so—if I could."

Lillian bent her head, and left the room. She tapped at the door of her father's office. There was no answer in words, but the door was flung open, and John Laford stood in the doorway. He looked unlike the man she had been accustomed to. Maddened by the heat, he had thrown off his coat, and forgotten to replace it by the neat pongee jacket that hung against the wall. His heavy black and gray moustache had been bitten off until it was ragged and irregular. In his mouth was a half-smoked cigar, and the floor was strewn with matches used in constantly relighting it. His face was haggard and his eyes looked fierce and wild.

"What do you want?" he said, with angry impatience.

"I think you know a young man who calls himself John Nomanson."

The color rushed into Laford's face. "Well," he said, "what if I do know him. But I don't know him. I never said a word to him. He is the young scoundrel who annoyed us last summer. You remember?"

"Yes."

"He is an impudent, dangerous young rascal, and ought to be in jail. Of course I know of him; pretty much everybody does; but I don't know people of his sort. Well, what of him?"

"He is at the hospital, dying."

Laford started, and his eyes flashed.

"Hey!"

"That's what I have heard. I am going there now."

"You!"

"Yes. Do you object?"

"Object! Certainly I do. I forbid you to go near him. You must be crazy. What do you want to go there for?"

She met his eye as she answered: "Because I happen to know that he is my half-brother."

The color in Laford's face deepened. His eyes grew fiercer. "Damn the young scoundrel," he exclaimed. "It's just like him to tell you that—" He choked in his rage and left the sentence uncompleted.

Lillian laid her hand on his arm. "Remember," she said, "he is dying."

Laford swore. "I am glad of it," he said. "I only wish he'd died twenty years ago. If there is a hell, I hope he'll go there."

Lillian turned and left him. He went back into the room and slammed the door.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN front of the Doric columns of white painted wood that support the portico over the doorway of the New Manchester Hospital the Laford carriage stopped, and the lady patroness's daughter, pale and composed under her black *crepe* veil, alighted. After her came the working girl, veilless and sobbing, constantly turning her handkerchief in the vain hope of finding a dry spot. Mrs. Laford's note was delivered to the lady-superior, read as a matter of form, and the two young women were conducted by a black-gowned sister to the ward where the dying prisoner lay, his eyes fixed on the ceiling, waiting for the end.

He turned his eyes restlessly towards them as they came down the long avenue of beds. When they came near he smiled, and stretched out his hand feebly to Frances. She seized it with both her own and sank on her knees by the bed. She buried her face in the counterpane, and pressed his hand convulsively against her wet cheek. Her slight frame shook with passionate sobs. He turned towards the wall with a half impatient movement.

“I’m glad to see you,” he said. “You were a good girl to come; only don’t cry. It bothers me.”

With a desperate effort of will she quieted herself and lifted her face. He smiled approvingly, then turned towards the sombre figure of his half-sister.

He said nothing, but there was something inquiring in his look that called for an answer.

“She came here to bring me,” said Frances. “They wouldn’t have let me in without her. Don’t you think it was kind of her?”

“Very.”

He looked at Lillian steadily, as if to add “What else did you come for? That was not all.”

She answered his look in words.

“I came to see if there was anything I could do for you.”

“You are very good—exceedingly good.”

His eyes brightened and fixed themselves on her face.

“Do you know—”

She stopped him with a motion of her hand.

“I know,” she said.

A quick-moving little sister, with a squeak in one shoe, brought a chair for Miss Laford, which she accepted graciously, but resting her hand on the back of it, remained standing.

“Do you wish to send a message to your father?”

Frances looked up astonished.

Nomanson paused before replying.

“No, I have nothing to say to him, but I have something to say to you. I see clearer now. It’s kind of queer that the light should come so late. It seems as if it would have been better if it had stayed away than to come now. I wish I could have seen things before the way they look now. The whole business seems so small. It almost makes me laugh to think that I should have cared so much. It seems

as if I'd lived twenty years since that night, and could look back and see myself a boy, making a fool of myself. It wasn't worth it."

She sat down beside him and threw back her veil.

"I guess I *would* like to send a message to *him*. Don't deliver it now---perhaps never. You'll have to judge about that. But some day---perhaps a year, or two, or ten, maybe from now---you might tell him I would have liked to have parted friends with him, and that if I could have set things straight again, I would have."

She took his unoccupied hand.

"It seems awfully queer," he said, "for a woman's hand to be stronger than mine."

The tears were in her eyes and two of them fell. She pressed his hand and he returned the pressure weakly. She bent down and whispered in his ear:

"Do you care to have my forgiveness?"

He nodded; then suddenly struggled into an upright position. In another instant Lillian felt herself pushed gently aside, and the patient was in the arms of two sisters, who were staunching the blood that flowed from his mouth and nostrils.

"You had better go, miss," said one of them. "It isn't good for him to talk too much. Perhaps he'll be better to-morrow."

But Lillian sat, white and rigid, until the hemorrhage was over. Then whispering in his ear, "I forgive you as I hope for forgiveness; good-bye;" she went away.

Frances stayed, and the sisters made no objection, because they saw that her presence had only a sooth-

ing effect. She sat in the chair that Lillian had vacated, and held his hand in silence. After awhile she took a Bible that lay on a shelf and asked him whether she should read from it. He smiled and nodded, and she read him to sleep.

He woke before it was time for her to go and said a few words with a great effort.

"You're a good girl and you've been very kind, and I want you to do something more. You know Vera, the Russian girl, don't you? Well, she's in jail and I want you to ask Miss Laford if she and her mother won't do what they can to get her out. I guess they can if they try."

Frances promised and went away. She had only been gone a little while when another visitor was admitted. It was contrary to the rules of the hospital, but the lady-superior relaxed them because the visitor said she was his mother; and the doctor thought that he was not likely to live till morning. So, just as the gas was being lighted, they brought her in.

She came in crying, for she was one of the kind of women to whom Nature never denies the relief of tears. But she stopped near the foot of his bed with her handkerchief clenched tight in her hand, not daring even to look at him, for fear of encountering the look that she had met the last time she saw him.

But he called her and gave her his hand, saying that he was glad to see her, and that he would never be unkind to her again, and drew down her face for her to kiss him. He was too weak to talk but he let her cry over him and caress him and utter broken words of endearment until they took her away, and

then he said faintly that he hoped he would see her again in the morning.

When the morning came he was still alive and the little rebellion of which he had been the leader was not quite dead.

When the sun looked down on the three cities that day, he saw his light sent back to him from nearly three thousand rifle-barrels.

The governor had at last come to the conclusion that his chance of re-election would be more damaged by allowing further disorder than by putting it down. The wire had flashed forth his edict; and the president had been appealed to. All that night troops had been quietly coming in. It was not thought safe to attempt to bring them in by train, so they disembarked four miles below, and came in without even a bugle-note to herald their approach. Last of all, just at daybreak, there came in from the west a shabby little battalion of sunburnt, hard-featured men, commanded by an elderly gentleman with grizzled hair, who carried his sword in his left hand, because he had not possessed a right hand since the first day at Shiloh. This gentleman and his following represented the United States of America.

Great was the joy of the wearied men of the Thirty-third, when they saw the succors arrive. Equally great was the discouragement of the rebellious element, when they found every threatened building guarded, and every principal street sentinelled and patrolled. Open insurrection was evidently at an end; but the broken tempest still mut-

tered, and a few minor thunderbolts fell. An Italian having been rash enough to come out of hiding and walk through a side street, was knocked down and jumped on until rescued by two policemen. They called for an ambulance and sent him to the hospital.

There the surgeons set his broken bones and swathed his fractured skull in bandages; and he was carried past the bed where lay the ring-leader of the rebellion of which he was the last victim. Nomanson looked at him as he was carried past; gibbering unintelligibly in his own language and trying to pull the bandages off his head: but with eyes that were too far gone to see.

Nomanson could no longer breathe while lying down and was sitting up, in his mother's arms, with his head on her shoulder. There had been another hemorrhage during the night, and the doctors were certain that the next would be last. He knew that she was there but his mind was wandering, and when he spoke it was of old times. The woman had murmured broken thanks to God when she found that the remembrance of that last year was gone. Frances was there, too, anxious to relieve her, but she would allow no one to take her place. Nomanson recognized her presence, but could not place her. He asked his mother who she was. When he spoke it was in the old school-boy dialect of the east side, that he had given up after he had taken to reading so much.

Once she saw that he wanted to speak and bent down to hear.

“Mother, I done sumpin’ to-day I s’pose I hadn’t

ought to 'er done, but I couldn't help it." Those words exhausted him so that he finished what he had to say with great difficulty. "I've been fightin'—with Benny Wallis.—He—called—me—a name. It—was—an awful bad an' nasty one.—I guess—I—hurt him—I guess—I—hurt him—pretty bad—but I fought him fair."

About half an hour afterwards, a white-haired, kind-looking priest who was sitting beside the wounded Italian waiting for a lucid interval, was startled by a wail of agony from Mary Robarts, and went quickly over to her, guessing what had happened. Two sisters were closing her son's eyes and stretching out his limbs. The old priest laid his wrinkled hand on her shoulder.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" he said.

She moaned and shook her head. "Nothing sir, nothing now. I wanted him to see a minister but he wouldn't. He was a good boy, sir, but he never cared much for religion. I ain't no doubt but it was my fault. I didn't bring him up right. I hope I'll be punished for it, 'stead of him. Oh! sir, if you could only give me a word of comfort. Don't you think it was my fault and not his?"

She dropped on her knees and covered her face with her hands. The old man laid his hand on her head.

"I can't judge between you, my daughter," he said, "but remember this, there is no limit to the mercy of God."



Outside the hospital fence a ragged boy was wiping his eyes with his coat sleeve.

* * * * *

When the hospital attendants came to look over the dead man's clothes, they found a letter directed to the secretary of the trades-union to which he belonged. In it was what money he had and some directions as to his burial, concluding as follows:

“Don’t put up any headstone or anything else to mark the place, not even a mound. I never ought to have come into this world and I want everybody to forget me when I have gone out of it.”

CHAPTER XL.

IT seemed as if Nomanson's death atoned in some way for the sins of his followers. At any rate when it became known that he was dead, press and people began to relax the fury of their cry for vengeance. In a week the newspapers were demanding no more than that "strict justice should be done to all, without fear and without favor;" and the relatives of the dead and wounded militiamen were no longer able to enjoy the novel sensation of having a respectfully attentive audience whenever they felt inclined to denounce the participants in the riot. On the other hand, those who sympathized with the latter began to take courage again and were once more to be heard openly expressing their disapproval of the course of the authorities. While the officers of the law, from the governor to the latest appointment on the police force, were remembering that it is not well, in a political sense, to treat with harshness rioters who have with them the sympathies of "organized labor." And the trades-unions in general sympathized with these rioters. It is true that they passed resolutions "deploring," the late disturbances, and denounced vehemently all who said that strikers had anything to do with them, in spite of the fact that the fallen ring leader was a trades-union member in good standing. In fact, a story was circulated for a while that

Nomanson and his followers were "Pinkerton thugs," in disguise especially hired by the capitalists to throw discredit on the cause of "labor." But that rumor was too absurd and it was laughed out of existence.

But the trades-unions agreed that the real blame lay with the plutocrats, and that the rioters were men driven to desperation by hunger. Whether the individual members of the unions believed this or not they were unanimous in thinking that no friend of the workingman would wish to see the captive insurgents on the scaffold.

Still the forms of the law had to be gone through with ; and these, though they do not always grind small, do grind "exceeding slow." Vera Nicholaef was the first of the important prisoners to be discharged, and it was late in November before the doors of the jail opened for her.

She was met on the sidewalk by half a dozen of her friends who escorted her to her former lodging. Élise was not one of them ; she was still at Chicago where she had been in hiding.

At the door of the house Vera asked her friends to leave her, and went in alone. She asked for the woman who owned the house, and went into the little front parlor.

The landlady soon appeared. She was not altogether cordial in her manner : Vera had not expected anything else. She made no return to the woman's greeting, such as it was, but fixed her gray eyes on her, and said quietly :

"Is the room that I used to occupy vacant?"

"Er—yes. Yes, it's vacant. That is, I haven't let it—but—er—you—know—I—"

"You wouldn't like to let it to me?"

"Er—well—I—you see—I've got to make money out of the house or I can't live. I'm sorry to seem disobliging but—you see—it isn't that *I* have any objection. You were always a good tenant, I'll say that—but—"

"You can't afford to have the rest of the house empty for the pleasure of taking me?"

"Well—if you choose to put it so—that is—"

"Exactly, I understand. I think you're quite right. But you don't object to my having a last look at the room where I lived so long?"

"Oh, dear no, certainly not; you'll find it just as it was."

The woman was glad when the gray eyes were removed from hers, and she accompanied her guest to the foot of the stairs, expressing her anxiety to oblige in any way she could. When she reached the room she looked around it slowly. Then she went to the back room and looked out across the fences to the spot in the yard where the two soldiers had laid him. After another long look around she went down and left the house without speaking to the landlady, who opened the door for her and breathed a sigh of relief when she was gone.

Vera went straight to the New Manchester cemetery. There is no bleaker or more dismal spot around New Manchester in cold weather than this. It is situated on a rising ground near the Boulevard, and, at that time had been laid out only three years.

A few spindling trees had been set out in rows along the drives and paths, and there were glaring monuments of white stone scattered about. Victor Lafford's body was not laid there. It had been sent east to the family plot on the banks of the far-away Hudson.

But near the middle of the cemetery, on a little knoll, was a sham monument in wood and plaster,—a model of one to be subsequently erected of more substantial material. It represented a militiaman, standing with his piece at a "ready." Underneath was an inscription in raised letters, declaring that this monument had been erected to the memory of the soldiers of the Thirty-third Regiment who had fallen in the discharge of their duty.

This monument caught Vera's eye when she first entered the grounds and she made her way towards it, drawing her cloak tight around her, for the wind whistled across the bare open space and sent the dead leaves whirling around her feet.

When she arrived at the foot of the monument she saw that it had suffered considerably from the weather, for there had been mighty storms of wind and rain, and several frosts. The wooden pedestal gaped with many cracks, and the plaster soldier had lost his nose and the rim of his cap. She stood for a while, her hand resting on the railing, looking up at the dilapidated image.

"Ah! well!" she said, at last, "I have no malice towards you, my good soldier; no,—no more than towards the gun in your hand. What are you? A tool. And if you were responsible what good

would it do me to hate you? Would it restore him to me?"

As she turned she found herself face to face with a woman who was approaching with a slow step and her eyes fixed on the ground. She was pale in spite of the wind and though not in mourning all her garments were black. Vera stepped aside to let her pass. The woman lifted her eyes for a moment, as she passed.

"Ah!" thought Vera, "you are one of us. I would speak to you only I don't want to frighten you. One of us, did I say? How silly! One of the enemy I should have said. No matter, you have lost your man my poor sister. How I sympathize with you!"

The woman still continued to walk towards the monument all unconscious of the interest she was exciting. She stopped at the railing and unfastened a package, from which she took a wreath of hot-house roses. She hung the wreath on one of the railings, and stood for a while, as Vera had stood. At intervals she raised her handkerchief to her eyes. At last she sighed heavily and turned away. A particularly fierce gust of wind made her shiver and she quickened her pace. When half way to the entrance of the grounds she met an elderly gentleman whose usually cheerful countenance was grave; and, at seeing her, put on a look of serious sympathy.

"My dear Miss Locus," he said, "surely it is imprudent for you to be out on such a raw day. Excuse the interest of a man old enough to be your father, and don't think me impertinent, but really——"

"It is rather cold, but I can't help coming here, Colonel. It seems to me, somehow, as if—as if—it was *his* monument."

"Indeed, my dear young lady, the thought does you honor. It is his monument, for of those who fell, not one was equal to him. I can truly say that a more gallant soldier never drew sword."

She sighed and stood looking at the ground. The colonel tried to poke a hole in the ground with his cane but the soil was frozen hard as a brick.

"We are having some difficulty in collecting our subscription for the monument," the old gentleman said, after a pause. "You cannot imagine how tight money is just now. And I don't believe times will be any better till we have a change of politics."

"I hope we'll have it soon."

She spoke rather listlessly, and the colonel seeing that she wasn't interested, hastened to change the subject.

"By the way, I have heard something rather interesting in regard to a mutual friend of ours. Have you heard about Miss Eversley and Mr. Briarly?"

Lucy's indifference was gone at once. She raised her pale eyes from the ground and fixed them on the old gentleman.

"No, what is it?"

"It's said they're engaged."

Then her eyes flashed and the slight figure straightened.

"Engaged!"

"So I've heard."

“It can’t be. Even Violet Eversley isn’t capable of that—with him dead only four months—I can’t believe it.”

“Well, ah,—I had it from what I consider an authentic source, I assure you. I’m not at liberty to say just where I got it, but it *was* thoroughly reliable, I am certain.”

“I *can’t* believe it.”

“Well—ah—you know young Mr. Laford was only a cousin, though he did, in a way, seem to stand in the relation of a brother to her, and she is very young, you know; and certainly it will be an excellent match, a magnificent match I might almost say; and—ah—the altered circumstances of the family make it very desirable. I understand that even if Mr. Laford gets all the damages he claims from the county, it will hardly bring his assets up to his liabilities.”

The appearance of interest had faded from Lucy’s face. She assented and presently they separated. Lucy walked towards her carriage, and the colonel towards the house of the keeper of the cemetery, to make arrangements for having the monument torn down and removed.

On his way he passed near Vera, who was standing before an iron railing about eight inches high enclosing a small and apparently vacant plot. He recognized the plainly dressed woman with the prison pallor on her face; and he muttered an angry imprecation as he passed. She overheard it and smiled; then turned her attention once more to the little plot.

Some withered flowers lay in the centre of the plot, and a few straggling bunches of grass had sprung up and been killed by the frost. Her eyes were dry and her face like marble, when footsteps approached from behind, but she did not turn. A moment more and Ardetti was beside her.

She was almost angry at being disturbed and her face betrayed it. He colored and shot her a look of reproach. Then he began to retrace his steps.

She repented then and called him. When he came back he still looked resentful.

“You don’t want me here,” he said. “Why not let me go?”

“There is no use in being unkind,” she answered. “You have broken off the train of thought I was in and—it is broken. Perhaps it is just as well. Maybe I was growing morbid. Did you follow me here?”

“Yes, I have been here some time, longer than you realize, perhaps. Do you know how long you were standing there?”

“No, nor do I care to know. What does it matter? I am going now, and I shall not come here again. I go to Chicago to-morrow.”

“Ah, you are not weary of the Cause?”

“Not while I live. Ah! my brother, they may kill our friends, but the Cause is still ours. They may strike us down but *it* is immortal. That is a comforting thought, is it not?” He assented with a nod but made no answer. She believed that he wanted to say something to her, and waited for him

to speak. At last he did so but with an effort, as the tears came to his eyes:

“Tell me, is your heart buried with that man forever?”

She looked at him half indignant and grew paler. Then a tinge of color came into her face, and she averted her eyes. She made no answer but walked away. He walked beside her.

When they reached the gate she stopped and faced him.

“You must leave me now,” she said, holding out her hand and speaking gently. “I am not angry with you, but there are things that one cannot bear. You must not see me again until I send for you. Then I will answer your question. If I answered it now I would send you away despairing, and that would not be well. My heart tells me that it is dead. But though wounds may leave scars that last for life, still they *do* heal: and I have seen women laugh who had sworn that they could never smile again. Perhaps when the spring calls these dead trees to life, you may hear from me. But I give you no promise. I only know that all things change. I changed from a child to a woman, and shall change to—who can tell? I shall never see him again, but I *may* see you again; good-bye.”

She pressed his hand with a strong fraternal clasp, and left him.

He stood looking after her as she walked along the road towards the city, over the frozen gravel, past the dead grass, and the spindling dead trees, her cloak fluttering in the wind. She looked neither to

the right nor left, and grew smaller and smaller in the distance until she was little more than a speck. Then she came to a dip in the prairie avenue, and went out of sight.

Then he lighted a cigarette and slowly followed towards the town.

THE END.

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